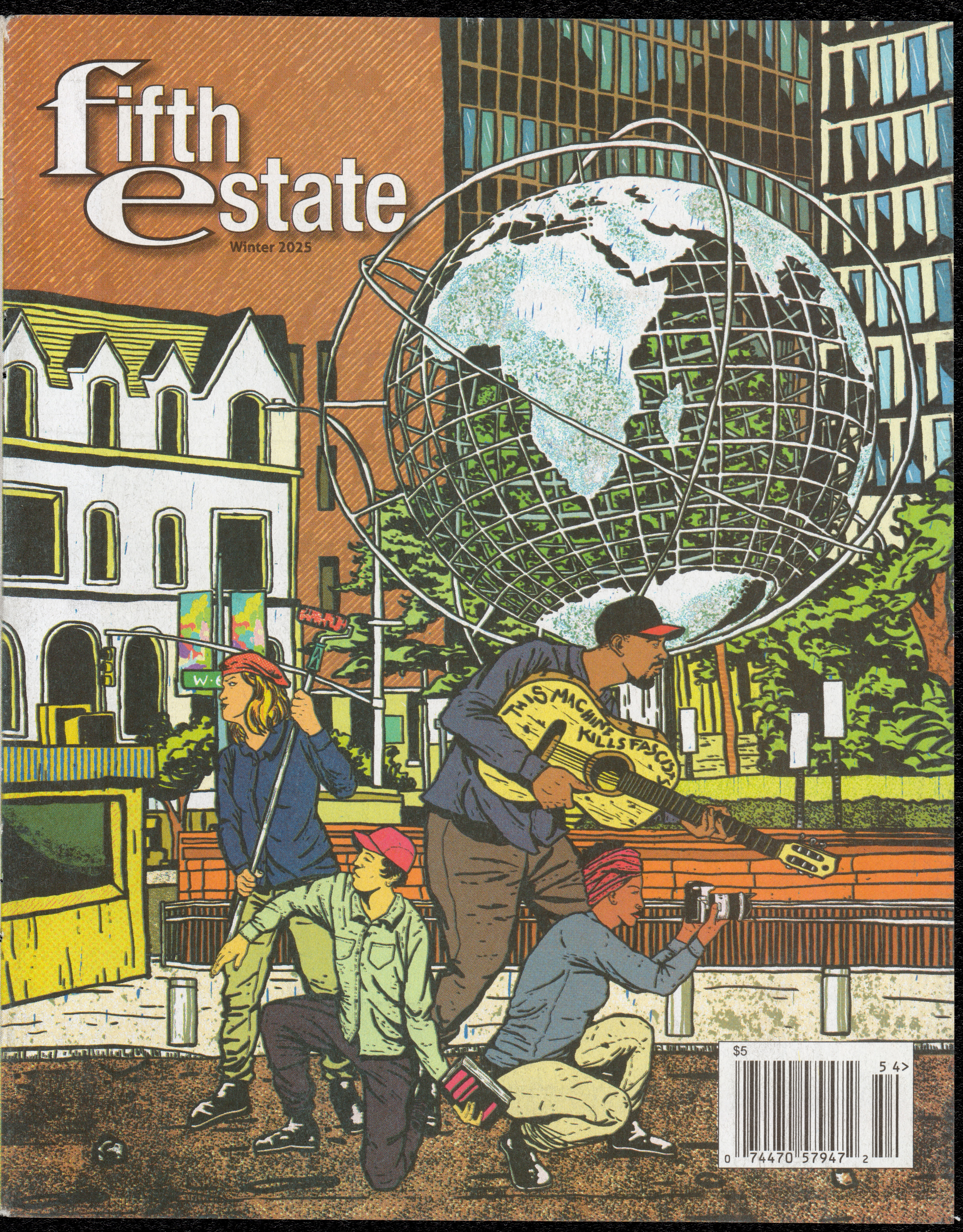
fifth estate

Winter 2025



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Now More Than Ever

The Fifth Estate is in its 60th year of continuous publication and for the last 40, our front-page usually bears artist Stephen Goodfellow's graphic assault on power accompanied by the Latin phrase, Non Serviam. Its translation is "I will not serve." This statement of rebellion is taken from John Milton's 1667 poem, *Paradise Lost*. It is the ultimate statement of the refusal to serve authority as it is Lucifer's rejection of obedience to the Christian god for which he is expelled from Heaven.

But his rebellion was born of arrogance. However, our decades-long encouragement of refusal, resistance, and indiscipline when confronting authority's demand to obey is based on a vision of a world without rulers or the ruled. Since the emergence of the State, rebels have repeated the Latin phrase in different ways in many languages at many times. Casualties have been great, but the vision remains.

It appears today that we are at a critical juncture in this nation's commitment to bourgeois democracy with the federal government under Trump pushing increasingly towards authoritarianism. The challenge , however, to those who refuse this society is no different than in other eras. The Red Scares after the World Wars, Roosevelt's internment of Japanese in concentration camps, 1.5 million Mexicans expelled from the U.S. during the 1950s, are examples of some of the most egregious policies of U.S. presidents in the modern era. But, the American presidency itself is a history of land grabs, genocide, slavery, wars, and repression.

The institutions of power are mighty and our forces small, but the task at hand is to not allow the idea of a world without rulers and classes to disappear. We are committed to this ideal and know that you are as well.

Thank you to all those, too numerous to name, who made this issue possible.

fifth estate

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Contents

COVER: Diogo Honorato www.diogorustoff.com

P. 6

P.28

P.22

Books Reviewed

3 **Anarchy in the Big Easy**
Max Cafard

9 **Ten Little Anarchists**
Daniel de Roulet

10 **Soccer for a Better World**
Vasilis Kostakis

14 **Nadja**
Andre Breton

20 **Stop Thief! Anarchism & Philosophy**
Catherine Malabou

22 **Animal Resistance**
Sara Colling

24 **Snow Day**
Willow Page Delp

26 **The Popular Wobbly**
T-Bone Slim

28 **Down by Law**
Crimscapes Research Group

30 The **History of Anarchist Red Cross**
Boris Yelensk

35 **The Strait 2**
Fredy Perlman

37 **Hurt, Baby, Hurt**
William Walter Scott III

40 **All Will Be Equalized**
Andrew Zonneveld

44 **Job, Jive, and Joy**
Bernard Marzalek

Essays

5 **Anarchist Dies in Ukraine**
Norman Nawrocki

6 **Doom Scroll of History**
Deep Strawberry

7 **Queerness &Prison Abolition**
Max Reynard

12 **Wooden Shoe Bookstore**
Carl Craft

16 **Plastic: The Slippery Slide**
John Zerzan

18 **Anarchist Poison Soup Plot**
Stephen J. Taylor

25 **Walls, Fences, and Resistance**
Franklin López

32 **Fighting on the Mexican Side**
Fran Shor

42 **AI is Not Empowering**
Nick DePascal

46 **Feral Pigs & Anarchy in Hawaii**
Bjorn Olson

A Möbius Strip of Anarchy: The Big Easy

STEPHEN DUPLANTIER

The Big Easy is the Isle of Orleans, an archipelago of a long and narrow, always unsure island in a surregional stream. The Isle is a meandering Möbius half-twist in a topologically peculiar place connecting the inside and outside. If you start on one side and move along the strip, you will eventually reach the other side, which is supposed to be land but may not be, without crossing an edge. It goes by "Big Easy."

In French, Max translates it as *La Grande Indulgente.* There are more words to describe indulgence: it is also yielding, desiring, transgressing, pleasing, forgiving, merciful, leniency, and permissive. And, what would the Mississippi River be without its excesses and crevasses, or breaks in the levee. The Isle of Orleans is also the type site of an astonishing anarchist geography.

Max Cafard and Vulpes in a succinct text and with the spare black-line graphic style of a comix book, *Anarchy in the Big Easy: A History of Revolt, Rebellion and Resurgence,* presents a mostly unknown litany of anarchist vignettes connected to this unusually storied isle. Cafard and Vulpes explore both the deep past and current events as well as short-term political changes.

Anarchy in the Big Easy: A History of Revolt, Rebellion, & Resurgence
Max Cafard
Illustrated by Vulpes
PM Press 2025

5,000 Years of Anarchy

The Mississippi drains 32 U.S. states and part of Canada and, in the process, is continually deconstructing most of North America and somewhat hilariously, seems intent on trying to put it into the Gulf of Mexico—a most surregional carnivalesque endeavor! The first two ancient protagonists in this long story are a 5000-year-old egalitarian mystery culture, the builders of the Watson Brake mounds upriver on the Isle, and the younger 3000-year-old and solidly egalitarian Poverty Point people.

We know little about Watson Brake and its easy indulgences. But we do know that the Poverty Point people were quite enthusiastic about building a huge earthen mound with the outstretched wings of an enormous flying bird. The people completed this important whimsy of their own free will and with rapid, yet unforced labor. They likely completed their project in three joyous months.

These were the archetypal easy ancients of the Big Easy. We might add that they were tolerant, permissive, accommodating, forgiving, and generous as their peaceable archaeological record reveals. They were, in a way, the first Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs, a New Orleans institution to this day.

Next came the importation of Black captives to the Isle. The arriving Africans immediately began meeting under the cover of night to make plans to outsmart and destroy their captors. The captured Africans joined forces with the native tribes near Bayou St. John to plot their escape strategies and to overcome their captors. The resistance by the always rebellious Africans against their colonial slavery overlords never stopped and included armed revolution and countless guerrilla actions.

The anarchist geographer, Elisée Reclus, was an eyewitness to the Africans' plight when he worked on the Isle in Louisiana in the mid-19th century. Those years were the worst of the peak horrors of the slave trade and the cruelty against Black people. Reclus' writings and texts about racism and slavery contributed to informing and persuading a politically and socially

awakening Europe. A bit later, another European intellectual, Joseph Déjacque, developed anarcho-communist feminist antiracist ideas during his time in the city, envisioning a cosmic, utopian "Humanisphere" project.

By now, we are in the late 19th century and within the era of anarcho-syndicalist trade unions and the labor movement's awakening activism. Massive strikes uniting races, ethnicities, and classes were bellwethers of change.

Crossing into the 20th century, Creolized New Orleans folk in the complexity-driven Big Easy archipelago powered the 20th-century African Creole diaspora's cultural resurgence in jazz, blues, and expressive culture. This cultural explosion changed global music and is still the primary fount of style and expressiveness.

Another half-twist of the Möbius band shows the racist and early fascist violence of the federal, state, and police forces and their aggression against African diaspora communitarian struggles. These were also part of the violence of segregated river flooding decisions and the engineered cruelties of pre- and post-Katrina hurricane catastrophes.

In our time, *Anarchy in the Big Easy* tells about the extraordinary revanchist recapturings of their lives and fortunes by anarchists and community members in devastated neighborhoods in the post-Katrina days. The communitarian anarchists spontaneously solved problems that the state and organized bureaucracy, with their blundering and dangerous incompetence, simply could not. There are yet even more episodes in this anarchist comix that I have not mentioned.

Anarchogenesis

In the body, the biological side of the epiphany of this general system principle I call anarchogenesis is the process of *angiogenesis (*growing new small blood vessels to go around a blockage in a blood vessel.) Anarchogenesis can be applied analogously and with sufficient practical correspondence to the physical facts of flow, as well as to the dynamics of rivers meandering and breaking through on their own to relieve pressure.

Anarchogenesis extends to the artificial levees built to constrain flow, to the strikes and work stoppages of workers that force management to break through their exploitative practices and discover other solutions. The process helps describe the energetic communitarian anarchists who, like a delta forming at the mouth of the powerful Mississippi, expand into a thousand channels of action and know-how, and come up with solutions that have stumped incompetent officials.

However, a blockage on a production line provoked by a strike may be just the opportunity that aggrieved workers in a union need to persuade management. A natural river levee can break open and splay out onto the land, nourishing streams and rivulets and preventing even more catastrophic breaks. In addition to smaller rivulets bypassing the levee, the process might begin to create another meander curve in the river's flow. Such an action is a desirable revolutionary gambit.

Unwanted levee breaks that are both deadly and disruptive, such as the work of the archvillain Katrina, can be turned by smart and practical anarchists into opportunities for a thousand homegrown and effective solutions that a state or corporate bureaucracy cannot solve. Whether a crevasse is a necessary break in an energetic flowing river system or an unasked-for crevasse which disrupts a community, the anarchogenetic drive spreads out in generous loving "deltas of Venus" birthing a 1000 flow patterns.

The physics of all these actions is explained by Belgian physical chemist Ilya Prigogine as *order out of chaos.* Prigogine views the Mississippi Delta as a vast dissipative structure of flows of unbalanced energy gradients. Such a scenario generates order through irreversible processes: chaos enables adaptation and shapes paths and solutions to community problems which evolve to maximize the spread of a blockage. In short, an unbalanced system becomes a source of order driven by self-organization and complexity.

The Mississippi River is flowing water, but also the movement of water's kinetic energy with plenty of mud and silt along for the ride. It all is carried to the Gulf and deposited as a delta. The delta's lateral fanning-out shape emerges from the interplay of channels splitting up and creating fractal-like patterns. Order arises from the chaos, resulting in fluctuating dispersal shapes. Prigogine's theory states that such systems maintain an overall order because they are open to energy and matter flows, not despite them.

Multiple channels are explored, and community work and organization are spread out into different channel bifurcations. Some are unstable and don't work, so shifting around leads to more functional and optimized dispersal of energy, intention and work. The system continually tests multiple unstable configurations, such as changing distributaries, until it settles into a state that optimizes sediment dispersal and energy dissipation.

Chaos serves as the stabilizing force in a river or community, challenging typical criticisms of anarchy. Chaos and anarchy are precisely the things that stabilize. If an instability or a break arises, spontaneous order from the failing levees or faltering societies can self-organize critically and indulgently, which is to say easily, in feedback loops of mercy and forbearance, clemency and absolution.

Broken levees and unkept promises revascularize the flows that precede new river and social channels of permanent indulgence. There is a thirst and craving to forgive and care.

Chaos creates order when it cravenly desires, meanders and dissipates extravagantly. Anarchy is big and easy.

Stephen Duplantier is a former resident of the Île d'Orléans; retired academic living in Costa Rica. Independent publisher and designer (Neotropica, Mesechabe, Psychic Swamp). Interests: plasma anarchy; electric cosmology; natural philosophy; complexity sciences; Orphic poetry; surregionalism. independent.academia.edu/StephenDuplantier

An Anarchist Dies on Ukraine's Battlefield

NORMAN NAWROCKI

We mourn the loss of David Chichkan, 39 years old, a renowned Ukrainian anarchist, artist and comrade who died on August 10 from wounds inflicted by fascist Russian forces the day before. He died defending the Zaporizhzhia front in southeast Ukraine on land which Nestor Makhno's anarchist army once controlled from 1918 to 1921. Always on the side of justice, David fought for solidarity without borders, for a world with no masters, where everyone could live free.

On August 17, hundreds of Ukrainian, Russian and Belarusian anarchists gathered in the historic Maidan Square in Kyiv's centre to bury and honour him. It was the largest gathering of anarchists in Ukraine since the Russian invasion. The hearse carrying his coffin drove around the square blaring old anarchist songs in Ukrainian, while mourners set off flares, carried his artwork, and brandished black and red flags.

Widely known and respected in the Ukrainian anarchist movement, David was part of a collective of soldiers called the United Anti-Authoritarian Forces of Ukraine. In his words, "We show the world that all groups voluntarily join our army to defend the country, not only the right wing or the far right, but also Jews, LGBTQI, Roma, Muslims, and the left wing."

Born in Kyiv in 1986 to a family that spans generations of artists, David became an anti-fascist at nineteen, joined SHARP —Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice—and fought racists and neo-Nazis in the streets. As an anarchist, he challenged anyone intolerant of otherness, including authoritarian leftists, Stalinists, and supporters of the USSR.

An internationalist, he donated his wonderful art to causes from Belarus to Belgium to raise funds for anarchist prisoners. He generously contributed pieces for one of my plays, *'Marusya Nikiforova, Ukraine's legendary anarchist warrior,'* and for a YouTube music video for a fundraiser for the anti-authoritarian Solidarity Collectives in Ukraine.

His early work was inspired by street anti-fascists and other protesters. Some of his art exhibits provoked a reaction from ultra-rightist Ukrainians who vandalized two of them in 2017 and 2022, and forced the cancellation of a third last year.

After the 2022 Russian invasion, he tried to join the army, but was rejected because of poor health. During this period, he devoted himself to drawing and painting anti-authoritarian fighters on the front, saying in one interview that, "these heroes are representatives of the anarchist and anti-authoritarian socialist movements who defend Ukraine in the ranks of the armed forces."

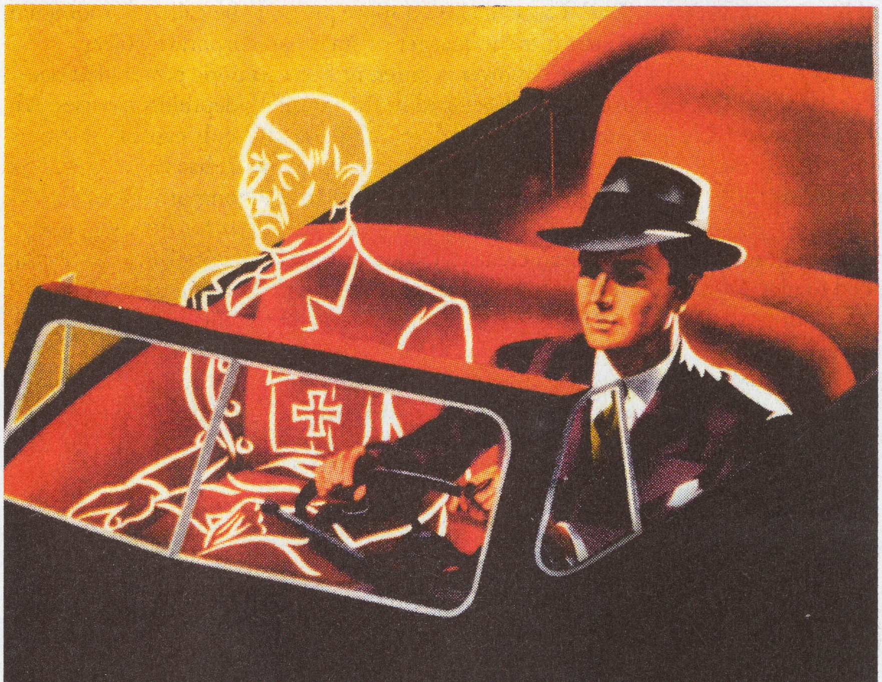
He said that the collective portraits were, "based on friends from social networks, but also comrades and friends. Volunteer internationalists with left wing anti-authoritarian political views… brave guys and girls who were involved in rallies, protests, direct action and trade unions . . . now they are repelling the attacks of the fascist-imperial invaders of the Kremlin army." Once his health improved, he enlisted voluntarily in February 2024. He wrote to me that, "if I am lucky, I'll be a mortar operator."

"I love Ukraine, I see some advantages of living here even during the war," he said. He is survived by his wife and infant son.

David's artwork is at instagram.com/davidchichkan/

Support the Ukrainian resistance movement and people affected by the Russian invasion through the Solidarity Collectives: solidaritycollective.org/en

Norman Nawrocki is a Montreal cabaret artist, violinist, actor and educator. He has written 19 books, many theatre pieces, and recorded over 70 music albums.



The Doom Scroll of History Undone in Poetry

DEEP STRAWBERRY

They are fighting for the sovereignty of capital. Warlike adamance, pressurized plunder. Capitalism has always been war, but this sadism is evangelism in the name of their only belief. Fully activated and pushed to its furthest limits, this version ends in pure nihilism: everything is value, therefore, nothing has value. This time, we are inside the machine. The weapon is technological enclosure. Inside this nightless regime, language is code.

The euphemisms of our era transition seem benign, everyone has accepted the metaphors. But a webpage is not a page, nor is it even a site. The words are placeholders that obscure a process, a process which requires stilling one's body, turning one's human presence non-relationally to face a machine. The words ferry us away from the object world toward immateriality. It is that realm of *immateriality*— which does not concretely exist, which must be imagined—at which their force is aimed.

The digital world gets conflated with this realm, or stands in for it. The early "web" was imagined as connectivity, a benign telephonic complexity. It was optional. But now, digital life is an increasingly complex weapon turned upon us. There, the social world is rationalized by algorithm. Enscreened and touching something misimagined as the world, we are alone with language, but not really writing.

Human language evolves inside the heat of relationships, amid play, among the particularity of places with unmappable streets—word of mouth, flirtation, sparring, love, sex, jokes, misused words, secrets, appropriation, mispronunciation, slang.

These kinds of speech birth new forms, new language, new ways of inhabiting the world. If language is how we conceptualize the world, this linguistic birthing reshapes the world. Language is a social malleability that constantly expands what is thinkable by expanding what is sayable. It creates what is recognized and recognizable.

Research shows that young girls are at the forefront of this social generativity, and Black young girls at its avant-garde. The vitality is carried by social pollination. Evolving linguistic intelligence contradicts the belief that the world is known, finite, mappable. Language is not a virus, it is the sustenance of Eros. It is what comes through us, keeping us together.

Technological enclosure uses language against language's emergence. Exploiting language to convert it to code is the ontology of artificial intelligence, now premised on large "golem" language models. We love the internet sometimes, but human rights are being dismantled with reactionary, internet logic, assisted by Palantir.

The tech company started after 9/11 to "find terrorists" and has garnered recent attention for enabling the Trump administration to merge vast and varying types of personal information in a conglomeration not previously possible.

Writes Giorgio Agamben, "in the spectacle, our linguistic nature comes back to us inverted." Surveillance has always been tech's visible shadow. The industry is parasitical now on human

connectivity. It abuses the primary medium of human social life: language.

Increasingly, arguments about technology's make-believe 'neutrality' are fully abandoned inside the industry for concepts like *meritocracy*. In various online interviews, Palantir's CEO Alex Karp espouses the need to dominate the AI market, mixing anti-China zealotry with a declarations of the 'superiority' of Western civilization.

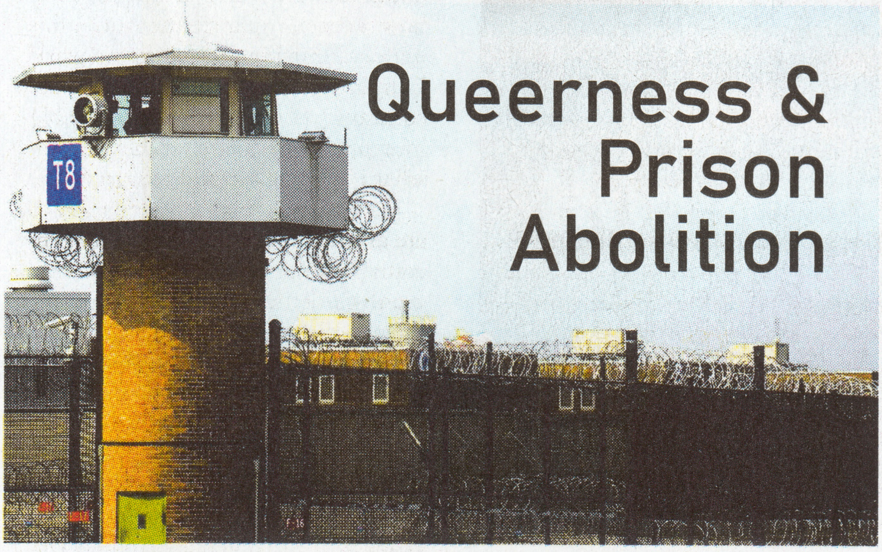
The rhetoric consistently devolves into anti-immigrant, white supremacist dog whistles. Karp responded to alarms sounded in the *New York Times* by vigorously defending the company's profit model. This non sequitur is an active ideological argument. Karp evangelizes to reshape the immaterial toward the inevitability of capitalist world war. In the physical world AI, catalyzes natural resource drain, ecological destruction and human rights abuses. Said Benito Mussolini, "Fascism should more properly be called corporatism because it is the merger of state and corporate power."

Creative power is different from semiotic power, that one-upsmanship developed in the internet's depthless binaries. AI is entirely outside of actual growth, it is only capable of representational growth. AI cannot think what has not already been.

Fighting this form of fascism is among other things, a fight to keep language open. It is a fight for the open body, for human creativity, for emergent, a-capitalist social life. It is a fight for the capability to create new life in language.

"The only war is the war against the imagination," Diane Di Prima says, "all other wars are subsumed within it." Locating power outside of the logic of this grid points back to the maintenance of the beloved world—for repair, and also play.

Deep Strawberry is a writer and artist.



Queerness & Prison Abolition

MAX REYNARD

In an environment like prison, people are strictly regulated both physically and emotionally. We're confined to our facility and told where and when we can move. Both bureaucratic and social rules also dictate that our range of emotional expressions be limited.

An outburst or meltdown can be misinterpreted as an attack, a risk of self-harm, an embarrassment other prisoners need to "correct," or another infraction against the social structure of guards or inmates.

The paradoxical result of this total regulation is a twinned physical suffering and emotional numbness. Simultaneously, one feels imprisonment bodily, yet is separated from the ability to adequately recognize the emotional effects of confinement.

Queerness only makes this emotional loss more acute. Prisons vary when it comes to non-normative sexualities and genders. Here in the federal system, both guards and residents with fascist ideas have been empowered by recent regulations authorizing official nonrecognition of diverse genders. Some state prisons, however, continue to allow for more openly building queer and trans-communities.

Any expression of sexual intimacy is prohibited, regardless of the participants' identities. One might say that in prison, everyone gets to experience the structured shame of the closet. In his 1990s book, *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life,* Michael Warner lamented "how hard it is in this culture to assert any dignity when you stand exposed as a sexual being." With prisons a generation behind commonplace social attitudes, the regulated and repressive purity culture of the late 20th century is a pretty good analogy. As in that generation's blockbuster movies, violence is celebratory and sexual desire is shameful.

Recently, I was feeling particularly pulled apart in trying to maintain a safe level of self-disclosure while not obliterating my queer self. I wasn't surprised at this experience of numbness, but wasn't sure how to climb out of it. And then, coincidentally, I found some writing of mine from some years back talking about how to survive as a queer person in prison.

It began like this: When I was in my twenties, I spent a lot of time doing peer-to-peer counseling. Knowing that queer folks were often on the margins in all sorts of environments—families, schools, workplaces, faith groups, social circles—we'd sometimes use the prompt, "What would be dif-

ferent if you centered your queer self?"

We were putting the onus on ourselves not to deny the structural oppression we faced, but to consider to what extent we were self-ostracizing, self-isolating. Sometimes, of course, the answer to "what would happen?" is, "I'd be physically attacked."

So, we didn't pretend that publicly centering our full selves was necessarily the right choice in all situations, just that it was useful to consider. If we were being constantly terrorized by a risk of violence in showing too much of ourselves, that was obviously ongoing trauma worth processing.

At times, though the answer we found was simply, "I'd be afraid." Not because of perceived hostility, but simply because when we had spent so much energy hiding our queer selves, we had gotten used to it.

We might have become adept at stepping around the pronouns of lovers, policing our behavior when it got "too gay," saying nothing at homophobic or transphobic jokes being told. We had adapted so well to that kind of life that even when we encountered supportive spaces, we'd go on hiding. We stopped code-switching and gotten stuck in the performance of normality.

As Audre Lorde wrote in her 1984, *Sister Outsider*: "For we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own needs for language and definition, and while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us."

I think about that a lot in prison. First, because so much of life here is a hyped-up version of middle school: the cliques, the gossip, the petty arguments and name-calling. Only with regular demonstrations of lethal oppression, and swaggering chaperons with tasers and guns.

In this place, centering anything non-normative about yourself takes guts. Some trans and queer folks are able to be out, but many cannot be. That isn't a personal failing, it's an institutional one with little daggers of homophobia and transphobia deployed by guards to divide and conquer prisoners. Geographer Ruth Wilson Gilmore documented how the prison bureaucracy in California fomented racial fissures among inmates to better control them, and this is a similar dynamic at play. In an oppressive system, bigotry is a force multiplier.

This helped me give shape to my numbness, to see it as a manufactured state in a factory of trauma, rather than a personal rupture of mental health. "It makes sense for a lot of incarcerated LGBTQIA+ folks to conceal parts of themselves, entirely or to all but a trusted few," I had written. And here I was in that situation, and felt somewhat comforted.

I worry, though, what happens when we move outside of prison, for those who are able to do so. Will we still be able to center our queer and trans selves? Or, will we have internalized the oppression so deeply that we go on hiding a powerful, beautiful, integral part of ourselves out in the wider world? What of our abolitionist movements, on the inside and the outside? How do they suffer without our full presence?

Audre Lorde, again: "The erotic is a measure between the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings. It is an internal sense of satisfaction to which, once we have experienced it, we know we can aspire. For having experienced the fullness of this depth of feeling and recognizing its power, in honor and self-respect we can require no less of ourselves."

Residents of prison are forced to conceal the erotic parts of themselves; queer and trans people who are here, doubly so. Will we forget, or curtail the full measure, of our aspirations? Will we give in to respectability politics (yes, very much a thing here in prison) to excise the more marginalized: too outside the binaries of gender or sexuality, or (sometimes conversely) too unfamiliar with languages of liberation to remember to use the right pronouns?

Even the most committed abolitionists have blind spots, and the guiding principle should be that no one is disposable. Black Liberation Army founder and fugitive, Asata Shakur writes in her autobiography, "Love is contraband in Hell / cause love is an acid / that eats away bars." Are we excluding some of our most useful tools in undermining the carceral system when we hide our loves, desires, and selves?

To anyone in prison right now, it's critical to remember that the place where we live is a purposeful distortion of humanity, crystallized by oppression and curdled with violence. Prisons are meant to be dehumanizing, and even more so for those on the margins. It's not an exaggeration to say that your suffering is the fuel that keeps the apparatus of immiseration humming. You are not crazy. You are right to be outraged.

You may not be able to change it now, and you may not even be able to tell anyone, but you can nurture that spark inside that contains your whole self. You can remind your love and your desire, your intimacy and eroticism, that it is a vital part not only of you, but of abolition and liberation. You are not who prison demands you to be.

You are surviving pending revolution, not giving up. And when you can, interrogate whether silence is still your friend, or if your vulnerability can also power your greatest strength.

Max Reynard is currently incarcerated in a federal prison and is working on a zine about LGBTQ+ prisoners called *Queer on the Inside*.

Ten Little Anarchists
Daniel de Roulet
Autonomedia, 2023

MARIUS MASON

Ten Little Anarchists Searching for a New World

Daniel de Roulet's novella, *Ten Little Anarchists,* is a masterful weave of fantasy and fact, history and histrionics, ideology and imagination.

It is a blend of feminist thought, pragmatic practice, and an open dialogue about strategy and priorities for the anarchist movement.

It is told through the dynamic conversations and lives of ten anarchist women who strike out on their own and leave the old world behind in their effort to create a truly anarchist community in a foreign land.

The story is based loosely on a real group of women watchmaker workers who leave Switzerland in the late 19th century from the Swiss village of Saint-Imier.

The idea comes to the women following a visit by Mikhail Bakunin, who tells them of the 1871 Paris Commune and inspires them to try to live a different life, far from the conventions of home. The group travels by ship to Patagonia at the tip of South America, though not on purpose. They are driven by winds and find themselves abandoned there. And, so begins the adventure.

This tiny but powerful book is translated from French by Joycelyn Genevieve Barque and John Galbraith Simmons. I always am aware that the author may have used different ways of getting his point across, but the translation is breezy and conversational in the way the story's narrator, Valentine, describes the others and the situations they encounter.

It is an impressive device to drag the reader into the story, to relate the commonality of human problems (food, shelter, love, raising children) that connects us all and uses it to introduce themes and ideas that go far beyond the ordinary.

There is an element of magic in how serendipity benefits the small crew of women over and over in the story including the appearance of the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta at opportune moments.

But these are not helpless or hapless women who rely on others for their rescue. They are a committed band of feminists and non-traditionalists who are talented, resourceful, and courageous.

They suffer the rage and harassment of government officials and police, jilted lovers and stodgy society patrons, but through it all, use their ingenuity and intelligence to form a watchmaking collective that sustains them and provides the necessary capital to stake their claim to an island community to form a state-less state.

And, hilariously, their fragile community almost implodes over the goofiest of domestic reasons, but are saved from that final argument by a timely introduction of magic mushrooms into the shared dinner fare.

Having been in anarchist collectives that broke down over people not doing their own dishes, this was a comedic high-point of the book.

Unfortunately, the ten little anarchists are whittled away, one by one by the trials and troubles they encounter. The last one, Valentine, describes her internal struggle with the question of political violence and makes her decision with resolve.

I ended the book wondering what might happen next, as Valentine faces her future alone, but unbowed.

Marius Mason, an anarchist, vegan, trans federal prisoner, has been confined since 2008 for acts in defense of the environment. He was an integral part of the Detroit anarchist community before being convicted and we look forward to welcoming him back when he is released. Solidarity and information about Marius is at supportmariusmason.org.

Soccer for Social Good

Beyond the Final Whistle, Soccer for a Better World
Vasilis Kostakis
Pluto Press, 2025

EMMA WEISS

On a hot night in Houston Texas, two teams played during a social and political moment that carried more meaning than just the end result of the match. The significance was shown by supporters' shirts depicting half split Mexican and American flags worn by those in attendance.

It's the start of July, and the CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer tournament has concluded with Mexico beating the United States Men's National Team. ICE agents have been on a quest to meet their daily quota of illegal capture and detention of migrants and even US citizens, while a new prison has opened its caged mouth in Florida to accept the incoming torrent. On the TV broadcast, the game sounded as though it were on Mexican home soil, the majority of the crowd roaring in support of the black and gold.

In his new book, Vasilis Kostakis presents football (the predominantly accepted term for soccer around the world) as a catalyst for social change, and shows how the sport itself has informed social movements across the globe. Each chapter is just a few pages in length with titles such as Democracy in football, Democracy in Society, Football is Art, and The football gods are Dead.

Football wears some not so metaphorical disguises from the nationalistic to the corporate, but it may also wear a different cloak too, one that represents a deeper set of core values shared among many social groups, including those acting in solidarity with immigrant populations as in anti ICE actions taking place currently across the United States.

During a protest or a football match, too, there is aspirational cooperation and communication. There is also inherent opposition. If there were no oppositional force, no enemy so to speak, to contend with in the first place, where would the seeds for new ideas and new structures or defensive shapes in which to play the game come from? This is as apparent in sport as it is in movements like anarchism.

Joy and disappointment help to form the bonds that arise in between the highs and lows of success during a match or creation of a social movement. These shared social bonds extend into those of anarchism as well, the desire for play and human connection, whether planning an action or team play, there can be a special brand of solidarity built between a group around a shared goal.

Kostakis shows how football can be a practical place from which to jump into thinking about many subjects such as music, basketball, and art to name a handful of the subjects included in this 132-page book. From Albert Camus to Ursula Le Guin, to John Kunderri Moriarty, the first Aboriginal footballer to play for the Australian national team, Kostakis presents a wide range of examples of the outliers in art and sport, philosophy and literature throughout.

Football remains an arena, just as any other social structure or sport remains a vessel for the socio-political sphere of the world at large. Our collective ideals and hopes, whether purist and moralistic, or corporate and seedy or even downright genocidal, are revealed in how we play, where the game is played, and how we think about sport.

Football is always inherently political, and many fans tend to have an antiauthoritarian viewpoint. Where that energy is channeled depends on the fans and many factors that surround the game. Football is political too, from where pitches are built, where jerseys are made, and what players are allowed to play at an international level. These facets of the game always implicate the political nature of the world.

In a world of sport often ruled by corporate sponsorships and billionaire investors, there are players and fans who push back against these entities, against accepting unjust rule. An important example of this and one due for emulation is Kostakis' profile of the Brazilian footballer Socrates, who played for the Brazilian club Corinthian Republic (Democracia Corinthiana) a club begun in 1910 by five immigrant railway workers.

Socrates joined the Corinthians in the late 1970s where he was exposed to other players who were compelled to do something about the authoritarian regime in Brazil in the early 1980s. The football player became an important figure in the Brazilian resistance, in part because he was part of a team built on the principles of self-governance.

Football isn't perfect, and neither will the World Cup be perfect when it is tri-hosted by the U.S, Mexico, and Canada in 2026. As in any sport, there are few coaches, venues, advertisers or entities that act with a socially minded sense of ethics around the global power of the sport. It is sometimes within these spaces that athletes, fans, and social groups define themselves with football as the backdrop.

The 2026 World Cup will be interesting to say the least, with the immigration and travel bans issued at present while the status of many nations slotted to compete have been placed on government watch and do-not-fly lists. Which begs the question, who will be allowed to compete, and who will be watching from the sidelines from home? Whose flag will be allowed to wave over the match?

Will the tifo (Italian for tifosi, short for supporter) banners raised at the World Cup game bear political messages? Fans raised a tifo in support of Palestine at a Paris Saint-Germaine match against Atletico Madrid in France earlier this year, prompting a statement from the interior minister stating that banners would be forbidden at future matches altogether. People and politics are more than just banners and signifiers, but they remain important symbols in a world where the competition is a deadly one and where genocide is either acceptable or it is not.

Major clubs with corporate sponsorships and big stars make it easy to dismiss the sport as one that goes grossly beyond the ethics of power. But to only look at those aspects would deny football of some of its less nameable traits, the invisible and decisively beautiful aspects that are truer to the essence of why those of us who watch football keep coming back.

Advertisers and clubs, investors and media conglomerates that want our membership dues for watching games may view us as a passive audience. To corporate entities at major clubs, fans may represent just another seat filled at the end of the night, another paying customer. But with attendance also comes the power of being together, which presents the opportunity for shared public expression.

Along with some of the positive aspects of the sport there are the common incidences of hyper-nationalism and racism that take place from the fan level up through the clubs from management through to players, this is, however, not the focus of Kostakis's book. Yet, he does not present football as an illusory balm for the public's soul. This is, after all, as the title implies, soccer for a better world, not soccer for a perfect world.

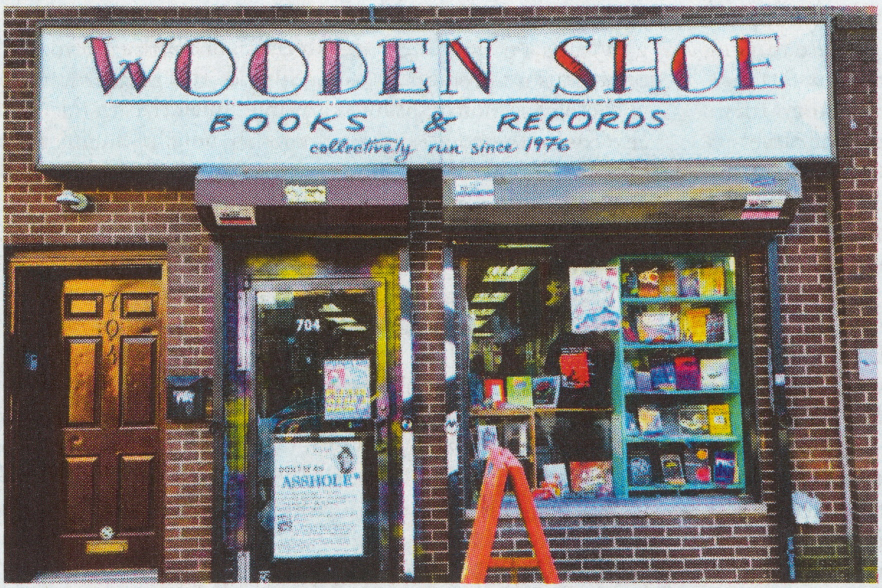
Football as a whole has often inspired resistance, and Beyond the Final Whistle shows many inspired people who have acted with courage as forward thinkers. The vast majority of Kostaki's book is aimed toward readers who are not necessarily football fans and provides many entry points for readers with different interests.

As Kostakis presents at the start of the book, football itself is also an art, and all art presents an opportunity through which to view the world differently or to engage with ideas and positions outside of the norm. Football may be viewed as an art form by the world's millions of players and spectators who appreciate it for its aesthetic qualities, creativity, dance-like structure, problem solving, ingenuity and its innovations. It seems then that football could be an essential tool for engagement whether you are a player, a fan, or are just a curious bystander walking by a pickup game on a Wednesday night as you watch bats circle the streetlights overhead, the dull thud of the ball repeating across a pitch in any small town across the globe.

If we choose to accept football as art, this opens up the possibility that many social and political movements of our time, of any time, (that includes anarchism) can be art, too. Kostakis ends the chapter "So what is football anyway?" with how and why social movements can be art.

Kostakis implicates us all in the creation of and our responsibility to the commons. Of reader and player alike he says; "We don't all make the same decisions. We don't all take on the same risks. Certainly the scorer makes the critical contribution. But they couldn't produce art without the team. The team would have no reason to exist without the opposing teams. Teams would not exist without the sport. None of it would exist without society. Everything is created in common."

Emma Weiss is a writer, poet, musician and carpenter from Rhode Island. Yhou can find her working on wood piles or cheering from the supporters section at a Rhode Island Football Club match.



The Anarchist Bookstore That Shouldn't Be!

CARL CRAFT

Wooden Shoe, as a publicly facing anarchist infoshop, was established in 1976 and, using capitalist projections, shouldn't exist. Amazingly, it still does. Many visitors share stories about their parents as youthful hippies or punks hanging out on South Street in Philadelphia and coming to the Shoe to learn about the system.

As a current volunteer described: "Wow, I was in my twenties coming out of the early New Left, SDS-gone-vanguard, mass mobilization against the Vietnam War, anarcho-curious, and searching for an anarchist project and practice or at least an attempt. The early Wooden Shoe gave me such a project in collaboration with others. Now, in my seventies, I've returned to Wooden Shoe as a volunteer."

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average lifespan of a new business is about eight and a half years. So, how has the Wooden Shoe remained active for almost 50? There are several explanations.

The all-volunteer shop, which takes its name from the *sabot,* literally a wooden shoe worn by French peasants that would be thrown into the gears of a machine as sabotage, is located in a tourist area of Philadelphia, so the store gets a steady stream of curious visitors. It stocks a wide array of book titles, including a section on anarchism as well as LGBTQA, feminism, poetry, graphic novels, children's and more. Monthly events also create interest.

At its start, some people involved with Wooden Shoe funded the proposed project. However, as anarchists, left libertarians and new left individuals, many with experiences in top-down leftist organizations and parties, acting as a capitalist and expecting a return on their investment was not their expectation. Rather, it is voluntary, collaborative participation that runs the Shoe and make it a place where people want to be.

The pleasure of involvement is clearly expressed by two volunteers.

"I love the community that the Shoe cultivates. Between the volunteer collective, event organizers, and our patrons, staffing the store ensures you will meet new, like-minded people," says one.

The other echoed that feeling, saying, "I like that being part of the Shoe allows me to make a difference in ways I wouldn't be able to on my own. If I have a project idea that betters the communities around us, I can propose it to the collective and have their support in pursuing it."

From the start, a fundamental aspect of anarchist relationships—consent, free of coercion, among equals—was tried. But the conundrums and contradictions were and are many. The ugh factor can be large and a sense of humor and even sarcasm is needed. Wooden Shoe exists within retail capitalism among all the other hierarchies associated with racism, patriarchy, class and other forms of systemic oppression. The store puts prices on peoples' creative efforts and thus turn use value into price points (commodification) for books, pamphlets, patches, t-shirts, zines. It needs a legal identity to sign a commercial retail lease, and more.

The shop currently has a nonprofit status with governments, its landlord and the world at large. All this requires designated officers, bylaws, and the filing of yearly financial statements with the Pennsylvania Department of State and the IRS. So, at times participants ask themselves, is the store an authentic anarchist-oriented project or just another small retail business?

What makes Wooden Shoe an anarchist project, in addition to the store's content, is the volunteers' ongoing attempts within the project to relate and

interact with each other based on a wide array of anarchist constructs—non-hierarchical interactions, consensus among equals, including in decision-making, inclusivity, and transparency with sharing on procedures, finances, history. They also strive for ongoing self-awareness and self-evaluation of our identities and personal histories and their impact on involvement and relationships in the Shoe. Many view the project in the context of the long-standing anarchist tradition of prefigurative politics, trying to embody the visions of a collective anarchist future. Often this is a difficult effort and participants fall short.

Those involved with the Wooden Shoe describe themselves as a volunteer collective. Since inception, people volunteering their time and energy have operated the project and this is a wondrous reality. Bringing in new volunteers is an ongoing process. People interested in volunteering are asked to be in general agreement with the store's written mission statement and statement of values and to complete three training orientations. Staffing volunteers determine to what extent they will staff and/or participate in working groups as well as decision-making.

All this sounds pretty straightforward. However, every volunteer has an ongoing life—which may involve employment, relationships/family, childcare/parenting, schooling, other volunteer activities, and their own physical and mental health needs.

Thus, there are significant differences among volunteers related to how much time and energy they can give the Shoe project. This leads to an unequal distribution of in-house knowledge of projects and procedures. Sharing information and knowledge about these is an ongoing necessity for volunteers on a daily basis and at collective meetings. The arrival and exit of volunteers is continuous and is to be expected. This creates an unequal hierarchy of know-how.

Given these realities, there are practical aspects of sustaining the project. Volunteer collective meetings are currently twice a month and the bylaws state that those volunteers attending a meeting make decisions as needed. No quorum required. The notes from a collective meeting are sent to all volunteers. Anyone who cannot attend a collective meeting, after reading the notes, is welcome to question and even block a reported decision by sharing their opinion/objections and any proposed alternate ideas within three days of receiving them. Once they do that, then the decision is not implemented and the expectation is that whoever objects will participate in the next collective meeting to attempt to reach a consensus.

Then there's the money thing. Leading up to the Trump election in 2016 and since then, revenue beyond expenses at the Wooden Shoe has increased. What to do with this money has been an ongoing decision for the collective. Funds have been set aside as a safety margin. The preference of the collective is to give away most of this additional money. At monthly collective meetings, funding proposals to organizations, including other nonprofits, are considered. Some groups request funding—from local Philadelphia-based organizations to ones around the world. This past year, the collective has donated funds or printed materials to thirty organizations and groups. (Fifth Estate note: Including to this publication. Thank you, comrades!)

In addition, Wooden Shoe is a supporter of the Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance (PACA). Through PACA Wooden Shoe offers no interest loans to Philadelphia based cooperatives. We expect to soon provide loan funds to an immigrant craft outlet and a BIPOC herbalist collective.

Carl Craft is a Wooden Shoe volunteer. The collective would like to thank the founders and early volunteers—Frank, Ben, Louise, Adrian, Steve, Barbara, and Albo. woodenshoebooks.org or sabot@woodenshoebooks.com for more information.

Cassandra in Chains

ADA ARDÉRE

Justice is vengeance in a world mad for blood.
Justice is debt when the slavers need their quota.
One-million innocents in one-million shackles:
one-million head of oxen
and the cops lick their lips like cannibals
when the masses scream 'They deserve to suffer!'

Animal experiments extend to the wretches,
humanity ripped from them for any convenient reason,
and those too poor to be exempt from the slaughter
weep in their cages in brutal, enforced silence,
where justice is a mask worn by lovers of power.

A prison is a prophecy of the future of a people.
Her invisible walls stretch past the barbed wire,
further and further until all are trapped within
and all of the heartlessness no longer only applies
to those unlucky enough to be known by a number.

Whatsoever is taken, whatsoever is stolen
from the backs of the faceless and weakest,
will be taken and stolen in time from the rest
who are neither a guard nor a master.

Ada Ardére is a Puerto Rican poet from New Orleans living in Kansas City. She studied philosophy of art and Plato, and loves beat poetry. Her writing has recently appeared in *34th Parallel Magazine, Wussy Mag, Writers Resist,* and the *New Southern Fugitives.*

Nadja and the Blue Wind of Surrealism

Nadja
André Breton, translated from the French and with an introduction by Mark Polizzotti
New York Review Books, 2025

CARY LOREN

"I love the disappeared, the dying, the forgotten... I love those who vanish into dreams."
— Renée Vivien

Mark Polizzotti's 2025 translation of André Breton's 1928 *Nadja*, the most iconic novel of the Surrealist canon, is a revelation.

Richard Howard's 1960 Grove version was poetic and formal, introducing *Nadja* to American readers largely unfamiliar with French Surrealism. Polizzotti corrects "a surprising number of mistranslations and misreadings," presenting a hybrid visual-literary structure as Breton intended—conversational, fragmented, and raw.

Opening with the identity question "Who am I?"—aimed at reader, subject, and author—*Nadja* is a genre-defying blend of memoir, psychological fiction, and dream-image. A book without structure—a collage of Breton's inner vision of Paris and his obsession with a mysterious "lost soul," that is both a liberation of the novel form and a crowning achievement of Surrealism. Breton's *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924, defined this (at first) literary movement as "psychic automatism in its pure state." Breton believed in the "superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, the omnipotence of dreams, and the disinterested play of thought."

Breton's quest for identity mirrors his rejection of capitalism and embrace of chance, love, and metaphysics. In *Nadja*, he writes, "What I consider the objective and more or less deliberate manifestation of my existence in fact derive… from an activity whose true scope is utterly unknown to me." The novel is an index of Surrealist strategies: automatic writing, dream analysis, flânerie, reading, prophecy, and supernatural encounters.

The book begins with anecdotes by people who shaped Surrealism: Apollinaire, Lautréamont, Huysmans, Uccello, Flaubert, Rimbaud; and fellow artists and writers—Aragon, Éluard, Soupault, Duchamp, Man Ray, and Tristan Tzara. For Breton, Surrealism and Revolution lie in "the marvelous line of footsteps that a man can follow when unchained."

In *Conversations: The Autobiography of Surrealism*, Breton describes Surrealism as a grand adventure: "Our taste for adventure in every sphere had never died... Works such as *Paris Peasant* or *Nadja* give a good idea of this mental climate… its purpose was to behold and disclose what lay hidden under appearances."

MÉLUSINE AND THE POWER OF ENCHANTMENT

A rare photo frontispiece shows Nadja—Léona Camille Ghislaine Delcourt—as a young woman in Paris, before myth overtook biography. Born in Lille, France, in 1902, her identity remained hidden for decades, shrouded in surrealist mystique and family silence. An auction of Breton's estate in 2003 led to the discovery of her name along with letters and

poems passed down through her granddaughter. Drawing on these, Polizzotti uncovers the real story behind Surrealism's most enigmatic muse.

Léona arrived in Paris around 1920 living on society's margins—working as a psychic, drug courier, baker's assistant—while battling addiction and poverty. Her conservative Catholic family in Lille believed she was lodging in a convent, but her truth was far stranger and sadder.

Though *Nadja* condenses their affair into eight days, it lasted over four months. Her life and writing—first exposed in Hester Albach's 2009 *Léona, héroïne du surréalisme*—complicate Breton's narrative as she is no longer defined as a muse and dream figure but an artist and poet in her own right. No English edition yet exists, but her voice continues to surface through research and recovered texts.

Breton's enchantment soured when Nadja began speaking of her hardships. After she expressed sympathy for workers crammed into second-class Metro cars, Breton snapped: "Those people can't be interesting as long as they can stand working for a living... How can this elevate them if their strongest impulse isn't revolt?" His disdain for labor and routine reveals a class ignorance or prejudice, even as he advocates spiritual unshackling: "Only if those shackles do not crush us."

Nadja celebrates both the irrational and marginal. Nadja herself is a marginalized, possibly mad figure, but in Breton's eyes, she represents a pure being. Her visions prophetic and her speech poetic. Invited to his studio, she speaks with surprising depth about his collection of art and indigenous artifacts. Afterwards she began drawing, frequently depicting herself as Mélusine—a mythical woman cursed to transform into a serpent from the waist down every Saturday. When her husband breaks the taboo and spies on her, she vanishes.

For Nadja, Mélusine was more than a symbol—it was a mirror. A woman who cannot be fully known or owned. Her claim to Mélusine suggests that Nadja saw herself as magical, cursed and powerful—a myth that echoed in later Surrealist work—in the poetry of Paul Èluard and in the mystical hybrid and fragmented women of Max Ernst, Hans Bellmer, Rene Magritte, and Salvador Dali.

The Mélusine myth is reclaimed in the Surrealist-feminist art of Claude Cahun, Leonora Carrington, Dorthea Tanning and Unica Zurn, embracing the archetype as a symbol of untamed feminine mystery, transformation, and revolt. Breton returned to this myth in his 1934 lecture "La lumière de la terre" and in his *Anthology of Black Humor* (1940), where he uses Mélusine as a symbol of the feminine-surreal and the subversion of rational norms. In his essay "La lumière de la terre," he said, "Mélusine, the great sorceress, will always symbolize for me the impossibility of fully grasping what is most essential—she embodies a world that slips through the fingers of logic."

Polizzotti also reveals Breton's affair with Suzanne Muzard—that helped inspire the novel's famous final line: "Beauty will be CONVULSIVE or not at all," and his concept of *l'amour fou*—mad love—emerges here becoming central in his 1935 novel, *L'Amour Fou*, a photo-text hybrid shaped around his second wife Jacqueline Lamba.

A LEGACY UNEARTHED

Léona's resurfacing signals a broader recovery of women's roles in Surrealism. Whitney Chadwick's 1985 *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* and Penelope Rosemont's 1998 *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology* expose the depth and diversity of women long overshadowed.

Chadwick notes, "Breton's association with Nadja stops at the asylum doors. Once institutionalized, she ceased to exist for him except as a poetic principle." In 1928, he and Aragon marked the 50th anniversary of hysteria with photos of women in ecstatic states from Salpêtrière hospital archives—reducing madness to spectacle."

Rosemont critiques this masculinist mythmaking: "From Mélusine to Musidora, these models provided radical alternatives to the bourgeois/Christian ideal of the good, selfless, husband-worshipping, submissive, ignorant, fearful, pious, hardworking, obedient wife and mother."

Nadja is a woman with mysterious forces surrounding her. At one dinner engagement, Nadja senses an underground tunnel below the café—she becomes frightened seeing a crowd where none exists—"And the dead, the dead!" she exclaims. Later during a walk, she sees the poetic "Blue Wind" in the trees—a wind of death signaling a change in their relationship. "Do you see what's happening in those trees?" she said. "There's a voice saying you're going to die."

This blue wind becomes a metaphor for her vanishing. What sustains *Nadja* is this uneasy mystery—her non-rational reactions to life are unpredictable—with desire constantly flowing to her from unknown children, strangers, and past loves—she's a vessel for desire, yet finds her own desires neglected. As Nadja is awakened to her artistic calling, Breton becomes withdrawn into a Freudian analysis beside the presence of her poetic Melusine nature.

Nadja also critiques power structures: psychiatry, police, and the museum system. Breton condemns how the medical system confined her, and how art institutions commodify creativity. For him, Nadja is a symbol of life unmediated by control—Surrealism's anarchic muse.

Another legacy captured in *Nadja*, shows a photo from the Saint-Ouen flea market depicting Breton's chance meeting with Fanny Beznos. They quickly bond over poetry and a mutual love of Rimbaud. Beznos, a Russian-Jewish anarchist who fled post-1905 Revolution persecution, had organized among exiles, distributed militant tracts, and moved in Surrealist-leftist circles. Her poetry appeared in *La Révolution Surréaliste* No. 9-10 (1927). Arrested during the Nazi occupation, she died in Auschwitz for her political activities.

Erased from official histories, Beznos counters the passive muse trope in Surrealism, embodying a forgotten hero-

ine of resistance.

"EVERYTHING DISAPPEARS…"

Nadja is a love letter to Paris—an enchanted fable amid urban ruins. Breton, echoing Baudelaire's *flâneur,* maps the city through its Surrealist sites: haunted theaters, arcades, fountains, obscure monuments. The novel ends where it began, as Breton retraces steps searching for Nadja through a vanishing Paris. He evokes seeing *The Trial of the Octopus*, a film serial of crime and disappearances, akin to *Fantômas*, another Surrealist crime-pulp favorite.

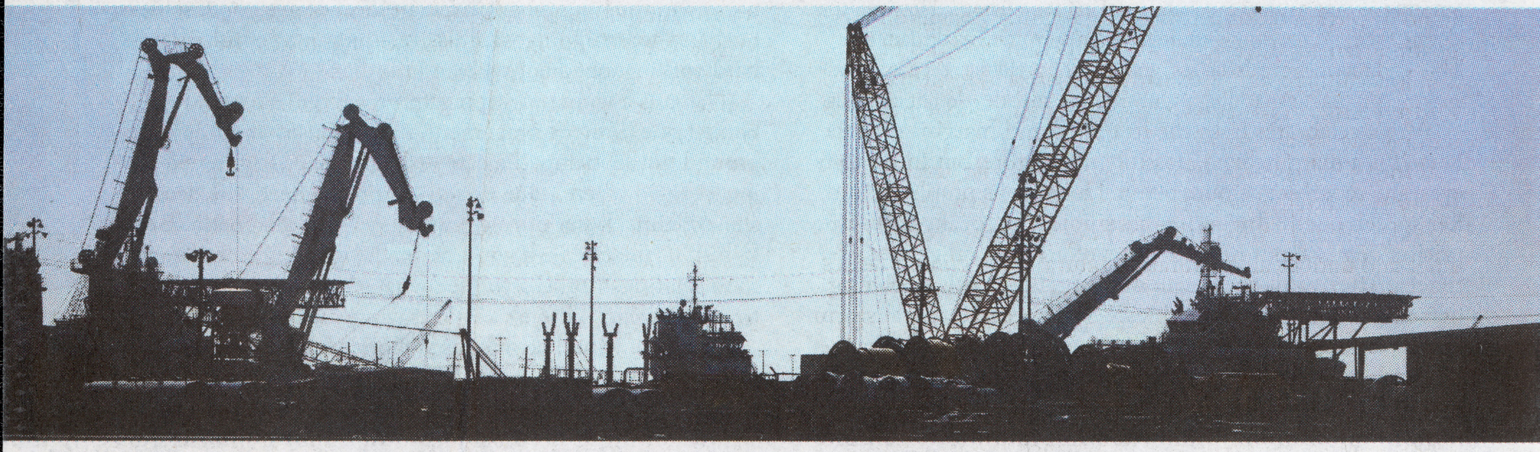
In an earlier chilling exchange, Nadja pleads, "André? André?… You'll write a novel about me. I promise. Don't say no. Beware: everything fades, everything disappears. Something of us must remain…"

After Nadja is committed and vanishes—dying in an asylum in 1940—Breton's Nadja does remain: a promised novel of love, loss, and revolution.

When Breton died in 1966, his home and contents were left untouched for decades, watched over by his third wife Elisa Bindhoff Enet until her death in 2000. In 2003, the auction of his archives became a marvelous revelation: eight volumes of lavish catalogs—essays, inventories, timelines—documented the dispersal of his life's work with thousands of books, artworks, and ritual objects. And in dispersal came resurrection. The auction revealing Nadja /Léona's identity. The vanished woman reappears—no longer just a symbol, but a human being.

As 19th century French Symbolist poet Stephane Mallarmé wrote, "Everything in the world exists in order to end up as a book."

Carey Loren is an artist, founding member of Destroy All Monsters, and co-proprietor of The Book Beat in Oak Park, Mich. where many of the books reviewed in this issue can be found. thebookbeat.com



Plastic: The Slippery Slide to the Death of the Planet

JOHN ZERZAN

Contemporary society has been engulfed and determined by the immateriality of cyberspace. A new remote-control e-reality lived online. It was preceded by another kind of immateriality, that of the move to the Age of Plastics.

Plastic is that rare substance that is not found in nature. In 1957, post-structuralist Roland Barthes called it "the stuff of alchemy" embodying "the very idea of its infinite transformation."

Its origin, however, was a bit more prosaic. In 1863, owing to the high cost of ivory, a $10,000 prize was offered for a cheaper substitute in the manufacture of billiard balls. John Wesley Hyatt won the prize with his invention of plastic, or celluloid, as it was originally called. A minor drawback was the occasional explosion of a billiard ball that had been struck too sharply. Celluloid was highly flammable.

Celluloid products were originally restricted to high-end, fancy items with an almost utopian association. Production of it commenced in 1872, but was replaced in 1907 by Bakelite, the first fully synthetic plastic. Bakelite, the model for future plastics, was harder than celluloid, non-flammable, and cheaper to produce. It used the mathematical symbol of infinity as its trademark, and became well-known as the casing of early radios.

Plastic products appeared and proliferated soon after, including cellophane, rayon, nylon, and newer classes of complex plastic polymers such as polyesters, vinyl, silicone, and others.

By the 1930s and 1940s, there was

a widespread sense that the Age of Plastics had arrived. But suspicion of duplicity and vulgarity had also become commonplace, replacing the original somewhat utopian feel at the origin of the new substance.

The more decisive time for plastics was World War II, with wartime pressure for all manner of substitutes for raw materials. With the postwar economic surge, plastic was truly in the driver's seat, and at the same time became culturally synonymous with the cultural designation of cheap and shoddy.

Testimony to the latter was the opening scene of 1967 film, "The Graduate," when at Dustin Hoffman's character's graduation party, a friend of the family provides him with sage advice: "I just want to say one word. Plastics." The word that had become to many "emblematic of all that is fake and wrong with the modern material world," according to Stephen Fenichell, author of *Plastic: The Making of a Synthetic Century.*

At the time of "The Graduate" and what it expressed in no uncertain terms, the reigning cultural paradigm, was postmodernism. It rejected the distinction between high and low cultures, and discarded categories like authenticity. Postmodernism was consumption *über alles,* judgements be damned; what's to resist?

One of its patron saints, French sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard, proclaimed in his essay, "Natural Wood, Cultural Wood," that technology is the inevitable ruler and undoes any natural/unnatural distinction. Plastics champion, Italian designer Enzo Manzini, celebrated surface, paralleling postmodern rejection of depth or causality in his essay, "Objects and their Skin." Plastics culture and postmodern anti-values: a rather perfect congruence.

The vacuity of the postmodern reached its zenith in the 1990s in terms of intellectual dominance, but its nihilism had certainly leached into the wider culture. The materiality of plastics, however, has anything but waned. By 1968, production was increasing at a rate more than ten times that of metals production. In 1988, a retired DuPont chemist predicted that humanity would "perish by being smothered in plastic."

As plastics production, dependent on the petrochemical basis of all industrial productionism, continues to soar, the prospect of recycling this avalanche is the popular response. So, the solution, such as it is, is confined to the sphere of consumption, not production. Not forgetting that the substance at hand was designed to be non-biodegradable.

Only a small fraction of plastics in the U.S. is recycled; eight percent is a commonly cited figure. Mostly, collected plastics are exported; the rest go into landfills or are incinerated.

The nuts and bolts of recycling processes—the industrial reality—is pretty mysterious. A bit of a sacred cow, better left unknown. Some contend that when the entire process—all the steps—is considered, the amount of energy required is a net increase. Recycling fails the efficiency test. Given the complexity of plastics, their enormous variety (utilizing an almost endless difference in polymers or complex molecular identities), there is no magic wand, no one-size-fits-all recycling solution.

Recycling may be something of a fiction, but the negative reality of plastics is certainly no illusion. Among the toxic effects, an aspect that has risen to prominence, is microplastics. The term itself was only coined in the UK in 2004, but relatively speaking, was long in the making. As of 2014, it was estimated that there were perhaps 50 trillion tiny particles of plastic in the world's oceans alone. In very recent years, the enormity of plastic's presence at the deepest level has demanded attention. Not just its ubiquity, but even more importantly, its invasiveness.

The Spring 2023 issue of *Harvard Medicine* featured "Microplastics Everywhere," making the point—including every part of our bodies. A recent issue of *The New Lede,* an environmental journal, reported a new study found microplastics in every human brain sample tested, with levels increasing over time. In the same week, an Austrian study found plastic particles in bottled water, leading to incidences of high blood pressure.

Civilization exists mainly as a technosphere built on plastic. Certain features wouldn't exist without it. Industrial medicine with its foundational tubes, bags, etc. But we are held hostage to modern medicine with its procedures and vaccines. Without it, I'd probably not have survived to write these lines. We need a drastically different approach, a non-plastic world, in which the price of our survival doesn't include the progressive death of life overall.

So many reasons to turn away from this world.

John Zerzan has written for the Fifth Estate since the mid-1970s. He hosts "AnarchyRadio" broadcast live and streamed on KWVA-FM in Eugene, Ore. His memoir, *The Education of an Eugene Anarchist,* will appear soon. johnzerzan.net

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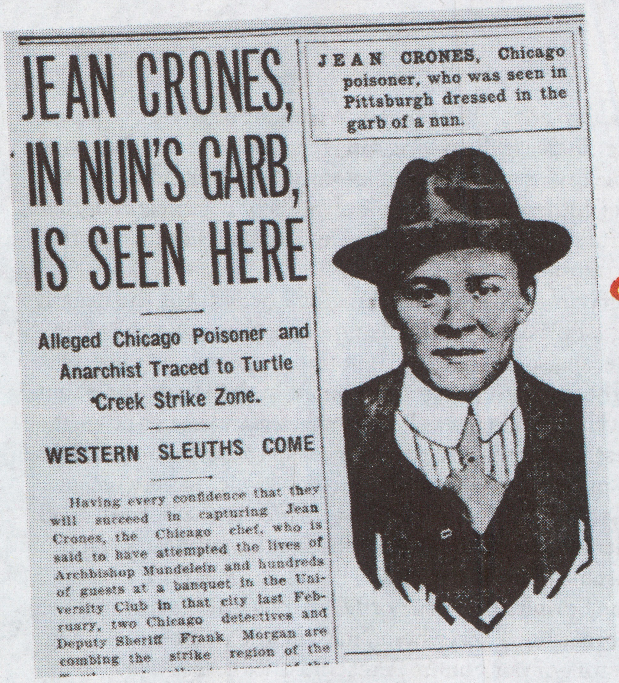

JEAN CRONES, IN NUN'S GARB, IS SEEN HERE

Alleged Chicago Poisoner and Anarchist Traced to Turtle Creek Strike Zone.

WESTERN SLEUTHS COME

Having every confidence that they will succeed in capturing Jean Crones, the Chicago chef, who is said to have attempted the lives of Archbishop Mundelein and hundreds of guests at a banquet in the University Club in that city last February, two Chicago detectives and Deputy Sheriff Frank Morgan are combing the strike region of the

JEAN CRONES, Chicago poisoner, who was seen in Pittsburgh dressed in the garb of a nun.

The Anarchist Poison Soup Plot

Bon Appétit Ruling Class!

This wild account of a plan to decapitate the Chicago ruling class in 1916 first appeared on the website of the Hoosier State Chronicles: Indiana's Digital Newspaper Program. The Fifth Estate rarely publishes reprints, particularly if they have first appeared online. However, this story of extreme class warfare seems unknown to most of those interested in the history of the anarchist movement, so an exception is being made.

The original longer version with many historic images is available on the Hoosier State Chronicles site.

STEPHEN J. TAYLOR

You like alphabet soup? Well, if an anarchist chef prepared it, you'd better take your spoon and dig out these letters first: *A-R-S-E-N-I-C.*

"Jean Crones" who, at a banquet in Chicago in 1916, attempted to assassinate the city's Roman Catholic archbishop, the Governor of Illinois, and three-hundred priests, bankers, and city officials — not with bullets, but with bouillon.

When anarchism came to the U.S. in the late 1800s, it was closely tied to the struggles of German, Italian, and East European immigrants. Iron-fisted reactions to Europe's 19th-century revolutions spurred philosophers and workers to declare that "Property is Theft" and to strive for the abolition of all governments, including democracies.

Since most anarchists had immigrated from countries with state religions, their animosity toward priestly authority should come as no surprise. During the Russian Revolution and on into the 1920s and '30s, radicals (anarchists among them) in Russia, Mexico, and Spain launched all-out wars on religion.

The scene of the crime: Chicago's prestigious University Club. Coming together to honor both Abraham Lincoln's birthday and George Mundelein's installment as Chicago Archbishop, about three-hundred guests attended, from Illinois Governor Edward F. Dunne and ex-Governor Charles Deneen to Chicago's ex-Mayor Carter Harrison, Jr. Most of the other guests were Catholic priests from all over the U.S.

As Chicago's health commissioner, city police investigators, and a chemist later determined, someone that day in 1916, slipped enough arsenic into a pot of chicken bouillon to kill two-hundred people or more. One version of the tale was that a miracle occurred. At the last minute, ninety-six guests showed up unexpectedly, prompting kitchen staff to resort to a time-honored remedy: watering down the soup.

Yet apparently the real disaster was averted by slow, talkative eaters. As Monsignor Evers, pastor of St. Andrew's Church in New York, told the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, some guests were "so engrossed in conversation" that they missed out on the soup altogether or had only eaten a spoonful or two by time their neighbors started to have stomach cramps.

With many diners complaining of sudden stomach pains, a doctor at the banquet suspected that the animal fat used to prepare the soup stock must have gone sour; normal food-poisoning, in other words. He went to the kitchen and quickly prepared an "emetic of mustard" to induce vomiting. The result is unappetizing to consider, but the elegant dining room must have become a surreal and disgusting scene. Yet the doctor's speedy remedy probably saved many lives. Scores of guests were sickened, some violently, but only one guest, Father John O'Hara of Brooklyn, died. Archbishop Mundelein himself was unaffected by the lethal soup, but Chicago authorities kept him under a guard of 150 mounted police and detectives for the next few days.

Police quickly traced the foiled murder plot to a certain "Jean Crones," assistant chef at the University Club, said to be about 30-years-old. Crones "often inveighed" against social inequality, said the Club's officials. When police raided his apartment, Crones the "souper anarchist" was gone, but investigators discovered a stash of anarchist literature ("a library of hatred," wrote one paper), a chemical laboratory and all the evidence of poison they needed to go after him.

As the manhunt for Crones spread out, he or someone masquerading as him, began to tease the police with flippant, irreverent letters, taunting the cops for being unable to find him. These letters and other baffling clues began to pour in from all parts of the country. When the story made national news the next day, a hotel in Binghamton, New York, reluctantly announced that it was confident Crones had been their assistant chef. "Crones was remembered by his fellow workers here as a dabbler in chemistry and photography. . . One day the whim seized him to have his own likeness snapped, and he had one of his kitchen comrades aim the camera." That photo and an artist's sketch were plastered over many American newspapers.

What happened next rapidly turned into a comedy of errors, one that went on for *years*.

During the run-up to World War I, when the loyalty of German-Americans constantly fell under suspicion, unfounded reports came in that Crones was a German immigrant, a saboteur and spy for the Kaiser. Other reports insisted that he was French or Italian. A biography of anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti claims that Crones was an Italian named Nestor Dondoglio. Chicago's Police Department officially called off its search for the mysterious fugitive in 1919. Yet Dondoglio evaded police until 1932, when he died on a farm in Connecticut where an Italian family had given him shelter.

Whatever the elusive truth behind Crones identity was, for several years after the failed soup plot he became a sort of comedic bogeyman, stalking America from sea to shining sea. Souper spottings occurred all over: in rural Mt. Airy and Oxford, North Carolina; in the mining town of Leadville, Colorado; and in towns so obscure they weren't even spelled right in newspapers (like Spalding, Nebraska, and Moberly, Missouri.) Crones, or a clever prankster, or a whole team of anarchists, harassed the police from New York City to Portland, Oregon. A chef from Iowa City was arrested simply because he looked like the photograph snapped at the kitchen in Binghamton, as was another chef from Chicago while passing through Springfield, Ohio.

Most of the so-called appearances of Crones, however, were probably imaginary or even deliberate hoaxes. In some cases, it sounds like the police might have used the poison-souper scare as an excuse to terrorize workers. Others had more comic twists.

Within a few days of his apparent escape from Chicago, the phantom assassin or his clever *doppelgänger* was on the West Coast, teasing Chicago police from a distance, mailing them his own fingerprints and threatening to kill "some bishop" in Oregon:

On St. Patrick's Day that March, Chicago Catholics were still so jittery that the Irish Fellowship Club had to appoint an official food taster for its annual banquet. He tasted every dish for over an hour. And, survived.

It's very possible that prank-minded Americans were just having fun with the police and the press. Yet by the summer of 1916, the spate of "J.C." sightings were still pouring in: Two of the most humorous and unlikely sightings occurred on the East Coast. In Pittsburgh, that May, locals were convinced that Crones had become a nun. In Luzon, New York, an undercover sleuth wearing false hair and whiskers was arrested by a town cop who was confident he had nabbed the elusive Crones at last. The man turned out to be a 26-year-old private eye from New York City, busy investigating a theft of $250 from the Hygienic Brush Company. In spite of this legitimate alibi, county prosecutors charged the man with "masquerading."

The real Jean Crones never surfaced. Yet the fictional specter he evoked, that of the violent, supposedly illiterate immigrant bent on destroying American institutions and lives, took on a frightening reality of its own at a time when immigrant loyalty was suspect. It's often forgotten that the Communist witch hunts inaugurated by Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s were preceded by a more substantial Red Scare after World War I

A fiery and brilliant editorial in the *Kentucky Irish American*, a pro-immigrant paper published in Louisville, conjured up the fear that the figure of Jean Crones was actually created by nativists. For immigration's enemies, the anarchist threat was reason enough for the U.S. Congress to all but close down Ellis Island.

Free Speech: A Brief History

G. KIM BLANK

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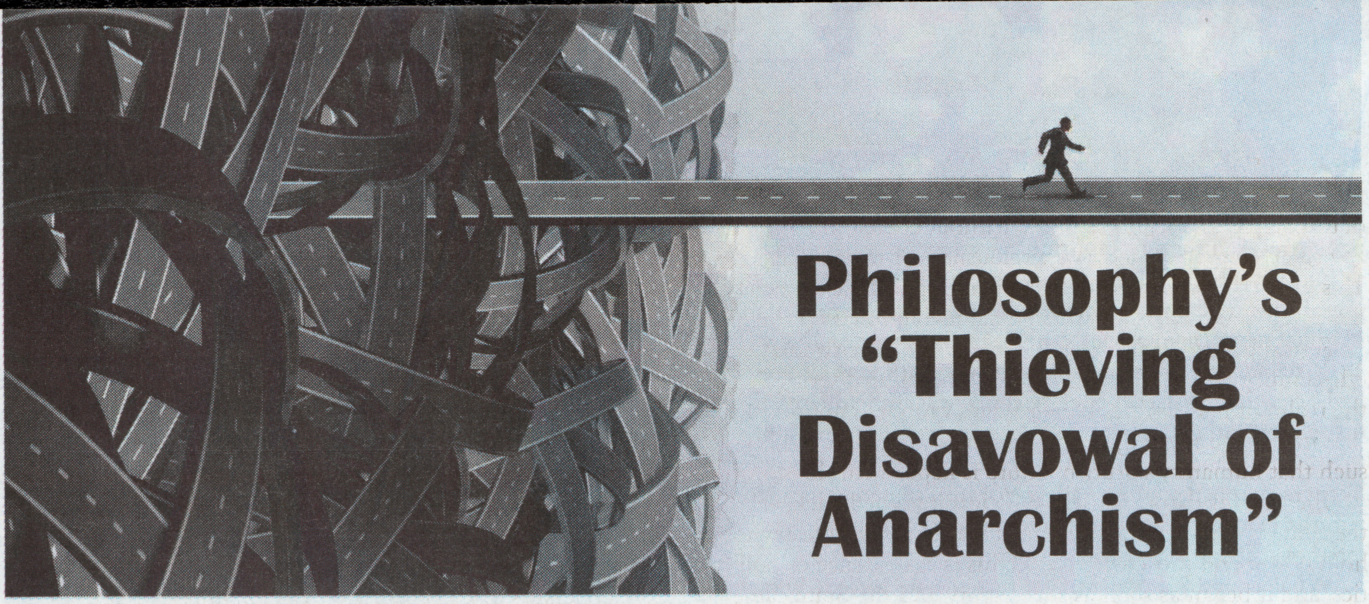
G. Kim Blank is a writer and professor in Victoria, British Columbia



Philosophy's "Thieving Disavowal of Anarchism"

Stop Thief! Anarchism and Philosophy
Catherine Malabou, trans. Carolyn Shread
Polity Press, 2023

ERIC LAURSEN

Catherine Malabou's challenging, provocatively titled book reminds us how philosophically radical anarchism is, beginning with Pierre Proudhon's deceptively simple decision to call himself an anarchist in the 19th century. It then investigates a curious fact about post-WWII European philosophy: that so many of its most celebrated figures were drawn to the idea of anarchy, yet dismissed anarchism as a political philosophy: a "thieving disavowal of anarchism," as Malabou calls it.

It's an important point, because some of these thinkers continue to be very influential, including in anarchist circles. They asked or provoked important questions—what is democracy? what is politics? what does it mean to be an anarchist?—and added important new understandings of power and domination, governmentality and resistance. Some of them created significant mischief as well, by caricaturing anarchism and insisting that anarchy and anarchism are two separate things.

Malabou is a well-known French philosopher and academic—her doctoral supervisor was French philosopher Jacques Derrida, and she once co-authored a book with him—who has written on neuroscience, epigenetics, psychoanalysis, and feminism, among other matters. *Stop Thief!* is her first book on anarchism, and her analysis offers a fresh perspective on what makes it unique and important as a philosophy, not just a political movement.

She doesn't examine anarchist thought in detail, however, and her focus is Western, going back to Diogenes and Aristotle and avoiding the work of non-European, non-US anarchist thinkers. That's because her concern is how postwar European philosophers appropriated elements of anarchist philosophy, without acknowledging their debt, but making their own, backhanded contribution to the tradition in the process.

The philosophers Malabou examines are Reiner Schürmann, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Jacques Rancière. But she starts by contrasting Marxism's obsession with history to anarchism's affinity for geography, by way of thinkers like Peter Kropotkin and Elisée Reclus, who themselves were leading geographers. They crafted a new, more horizontal way of understanding political and economic realities in place of Marxism's "vertical readings," Malabou argues.

Anarchism has never been simply an attack on the State, she reminds us, but is "first and foremost a fight against the mechanics of domination" in "all domains of life." Proudhon and the anarchist thinkers who came after him carried out a "semantic revolution" that was critical to all of the philosophers Malabou discusses in her book by proposing that anarchy is not chaos but "the highest expression of order" (Reclus) and that the "archic" order is actually a *dis*order because it is "not founded on free consent."

"Archic," from the Greek *archē*, is a key word for Malabou, establishing sovereignty and power in government as the first principle of political life. "There is not a treatise in classical political philosophy," she tells us, "that does not begin with joint consideration of sovereign and governmental authority, considered as absolute starting points." But that this is an error: *anarkhia*—disorder—precedes *archē*, and perpetually shadows it.

To be an anarchist, Malabou says, implies "absolute resistance to *archē despotike*": to "domestication" by systems of domination. Anarchism itself is "the only political form that is always to be invented, to be shaped before it exists, precisely because it depends on no beginning or command.... This plasticity is the meaning of its being." Reducing it to one authority, even its own, is impossible.

The six philosophers Malabou discusses each helped to decenter the "archic paradigm" in Western philosophy, she argues. Levinas anarchized the term "election" to mean not

the choice of a candidate for public office—another builder of the State—but a choice to act without coercion: "without any rule being presented to consciousness or to the will." This kind of election can only happen in a really free society; it is not a "national affair but a global revolutionary ferment."

Foucault, who Malabou calls "one of the only twentieth-century philosophers who takes [anarchism] seriously in the realm of politics," took on Thomas Hobbes's notion that the State—the sovereign—is necessary to organize society such that humanity's brutish nature is kept in check.

The state of nature *is* society, Foucault argued back, and the State is the site of a permanent war between those who hold power and those who don't. This is the essence of politics, and it began as soon as sovereignty and the State came into existence.

A key distinction for Malabou is between the ungovernable and the non-governable. The ungovernable rebel against authority, but all too often, in so doing, reinforce it, either through their defeat or by letting it coopt them. For the non-governable, to be governed is simply not possible: "indifference to power, indifference to the logic of command and obey." Reading between the lines, this is the thing that Big Brother is most intent on eliminating in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is anarchism in its essence, or for Foucault, the "limit-experience" that pushes politics to the brink.

Agamben makes a similar point: that transgression—an offense against law or established authorities like the State or the church that can often feel liberating—can actually bolster the thing it aims to tear down. What we need instead, he argues, is a way to speak about power without borrowing anything from language that confers a "sacred" dimension on it: to reveal the political dimension of God, even. This gives us the capacity to "deactivate" authority and render it inoperative. The job of anarchism, Malabou says, is to explore its potential to go beyond transgression and become this means of deactivation.

Rancière, who Malabou calls "one of the great thinkers of anarchy," asks us to reclaim the term "democracy" from the State by going back to its original meaning of "radical equality." This exposes the contradiction in modern-day, so-called democratic politics: While it promises equality in public life, this never translates into "arithmetic" equality, namely, equal distribution of the common good. Capitalism and the State solve this problem by setting the masses to menial, exhausting tasks that give them no time to participate fully in public life.

Real politics, Rancière argues, is not found in the phony politics of elections and representative bodies, but outside of them, which is "the sphere in which wrongs can be formulated expressed, judged." There is, strictly speaking, no such thing as democratic government, he contends, because democracy, in its original meaning, is not governable. "The political," Malabou notes, "is the anarchic form of community."

What would a state of "radical equality"—or anarchy—look like? It is "a constitutional bazaar, a harlequin's outfit," he writes. "It is properly the regime that overturns all the relations that structure human society."

Rancière and the others remind us not to ignore the anarchy in anarchism, and that democracy and real politics are, fundamentally, anarchist. So, why were they so reluctant to come out as such? Explaining this failure comes close to baffling her, Malabou admits. "The anarchist problem since Proudhon is precisely to think about politics without the aid of hegemony," she notes, and this is roughly the same challenge that Agamben raises.

The six philosophers covered in *Stop Thief!* share a few core criticisms of anarchism: a "benevolent confidence" in human nature's ability to create a just society without coercion, and a nihilistic infatuation with violence, terrorism, and death. But the same can be said of any radical political movement. A third, more devious objection is that anarchism faces a double bind: that to be an anarchist is to obey a command, which would be very un-anarchist, akin to the command to be spontaneous.

Anarchism is different, Malabou replies, because it is the only political philosophy that anchors itself in the non-governable, with its radical foreignness to domination. Non-governability merges with being, she says, which could care less about power and so is unlikely to reproduce it.

The philosophical challenge for the left was therefore to figure out how to "think" being and politics together. Communism tried, but only by resorting back to *archē*, which resulted in "terrifying [and violent] dead ends." Anarchism hasn't solved the problem so far either, Malabou admits, but with its grounding in non-governability, it is much better equipped to do so. "The real anarchist," she says, "is being itself."

Derrida, Foucault, and company missed this ontological aspect of the problem, Malabou argues, which may be why they could not see that their own analysis ought to have led them to anarchism. It's a compelling point. She also suggests something a little more mundane, however. All six of the philosophers she discusses began their political development as Marxists, although some moved on and all had criticisms of at least some aspects of the faith. But Marxism saturated continental philosophic circles in the decades following World War II, and endowed them with its own snobbism.

For a philosopher, "there's no shame, and never has been, in declaring oneself a Marxist," Malabou notes, but "calling oneself an anarchist is almost indecent." How about "non-governable"?

Eric Laursen is a longtime anarchist writer, journalist, and activist. His latest book is *Polymath: The Life and Professions of Dr. Alex Comfort, Author of "The Joy of Sex."* He lives in Connecticut.

The Animals Are Resisting!

Animal Resistance in the Global Capitalist Era
Sara Colling
Michigan State University Press, 2021
Animal Revolution
Ron Broglio
University of Minnesota Press, 2022

ALON K. RAAB

In the spring of 2020, a pod of orcas began ramming fishing boats in the Strait of Gibraltar, sinking three boats and damaging over 250. Marine biologists speculated that the whales were retaliating for a head injury inflicted by a vessel's propeller on the pod's matriarch, White Gladis. She was teaching her mates how to smash into boats and dismantle rudders in attacks lasting up to forty-five minutes.

During a cockfight in the village of Lothunur, in the state of Telangana, India, a rooster killed its owner by jumping at him and slashing him with the three-inch blade tied to its leg; In July 2012, shortly after a rope-and-branch trap killed

an infant mountain gorilla, two young ones worked together to find and destroy traps in their Rwandan Volcanoes National Park forest.

These two recent books honor and celebrate these fighters against human exploitation and subjection, and suggest ways that humans might become allies of our kin in this fight for liberation.

Mainstream media rarely questions uprooting an animal from its home and shipping it across oceans and lands to become a meal, pet or property, nor challenge factory farming or industrial fishing. Colling and Broglio oppose these practices and regard animals fighting back with respect, empathy and admiration, as comrades and teachers in the struggle for human liberation too.

Colling's *Animal Resistance in the Global Capitalist Era* begins with an historical overview of humans' evolving views of our fellow animals and how animal agency changed these attitudes. The book explores the why, how, and to what ends (and beginnings) do animals resist. It employs a social justice lens and an anti-capitalist, anti-domestication, anti-colonization framework, showing how the intertwined processes of control have shaped humans-animal relationships and how they are interpreted and presented by humans, including allies.

Recognizing non-human beings' agency and rights is not new. Animals, birds, reptiles, fish and insects were regarded as kin, wise teachers, divine messengers and even gods and goddesses in many ancient myths. Exploitation of animals has long existed, but already in 6th century BCE, human allies like India's Vardamana Mahavira, Jainism founder, made ahimsa ("no harm" to all sentient beings including animals) a guiding principle. The Greek philosopher Pythagoras, believing that all beings have souls and that we might reincarnate as any species, forbade eating animals and chose (along with his students) not to use animal products.

Colling's book is a welcome addition to the field of animal-human interactions. She describes the many instances of the often-sophisticated ways that animals resist human oppression and frequently break free. Her focus is on "the importance of listening to animals" voices, making our best efforts to read their actions, and respond in solidarity to their resistance struggles.'

Colling, a Hornby Island, British Columbia activist and writer, does not presume to speak for the animals, but presents their actions almost from the resisters' standpoints, noting their social lives and moral behaviors as unique to their species and to each individual, as they initiate their own liberation.

She presents the singular lived realities of animals, their rich inner lives and the way they express feelings of revenge,

cooperation, empathy and justice. Her examples substantiate biologists Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce findings in *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals* that animals are moral and aware agents of social change.

Colling makes the case that animals resist in deliberate and sometimes coordinated efforts and dismisses the common assumption that only humans are capable of moral acts. The elephant who sets a group of captive antelope free, the magpie who grieves for her young, the rat who refuses to shock another to get a reward and a pod of dolphins that protected a swimmer in New Zealand waters from a great white shark, surrounding him and keeping the shark at bay, make a strong case for non-humans' rich moral universes.

Colling describes our relatives' changing fate in late-capitalist society in a universe of enormous, industrialized farming, hunting, fishing, slaughtering and suffering. She regards their lot as connected to what befalls humans and the planet and emphasizes that their liberation can and must happen alongside human liberation. For change to happen, she states, we must abolish the capitalist ideology and practices that turn animals and humans into property and commodities.

Colling emphasizes the importance of assisting animals with their dashes for freedom, that include protests, media campaigns, boycotting products etched in suffering, and supporting sanctuaries where liberated animals can heal and be safe. Sometimes an animal's' revolt finds an echo in many humans' hearts as with the chimpanzee, Sami, that escaped twice from his Belgrade zoo cell in February 1988. During his second break to freedom, Sami climbed to the top of a garage as the news media gave minute-by-minute updates. Among the 4,000 Belgrade citizens that gathered to watch, many cheered him and held up signs like "You are not alone. We are with you!" and "Do not give up!" reflecting perhaps their own desire for freedom from an oppressive political regime.

Ron Broglio's *Animal Revolution* begins with a manifesto whose opening line, "Animals of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains," sets the tone. Broglio writes of trying to hand animals weapons—kitchen knives, a slightly rusted backyard chain, even a shotgun—tools for their revolution for as he writes, "Lord knows they need a revolution and have suffered enough abuse from the hands of humans."

Through examples of animals creatively resisting and sometimes disrupting business as usual, Broglio makes the case that they too are revolutionary subjects. He writes that, "Humans and animals are on shared Earth…We are animals, too…If we listen to parts of us that really call to being engaged with the Earth as animals, then we become more sympathetic to the world around us."

Broglio describes artistic works including Robert Bresson's film "Balthazar" where a suffering donkey assumes Christ-like attributes and South African novelist J.M, Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals* whose heroine compares citizens who ignore industries that torture and murder animals to neighbors of German concentration camps who chose to ignore the atrocities.

This analogy was first noted by journalist and concentration camp survivor Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz who in his 1940 *Dachau Diaries* noted that "I have suffered so much myself that I can feel other creatures' suffering by virtue of my own… I believe as long as man tortures and kills animals, he will torture and kill humans as well—and wars will be waged—for killing must be practiced and learned on a small scale."

Broglio, Director of the Humanities Institute at Arizona State University, ends his book by stressing that "to be an ally of the revolution means telling stories of animals as active as important players on the earth and in our own social worlds…There are untold incidents of animals in revolt every moment of every day. Find them, tell them, weave them into how you see yourself, how you see the world, and how the world sees you. Solidarity, comrades."

Novelist and activist Alice Walker wrote "The animals of the world exist for their own reasons…They were not made for humans any more than black people were made for white, or women created for men." In the last decades, there has been great progress in the struggle for animal liberation, but still "for the animals, it is an eternal Treblinka," as the protagonist of Isaac Bashevis Singer's 1968 story *The Letter Writer* says.

Those of us fortunate to know and love animals realize that our fellow living beings have rich inner lives, shape their surroundings, enjoy complex social relationships, seek their own well-being and consciously choose courses of action, including ones that oppose humans' control and harm.

Colling and Broglio write with a deep love and concern for animals and the natural world and a desire for a different world, one where all beings live in safety and freedom. In their insistence that animals are active participants in their liberation and in calling humans to aid them, are important contributions in that struggle.

Mocha Dick, the sperm whale who sank whaleboats, the champion racehorse, Chautauqua, that went on strike and refused to run around the track anymore, and the Italian bear, Papillon, who escaped twice from electric-fenced imprisonment show the way. May more animals, fish, and birds join them. May the rebels and renegades enjoy lives of autonomy, comfort, safety and freedom, for their own sake and for the sake of human liberation, too.

Alon K. Raab lives in Portland, Oregon. His "Revolt of the Bats" appeared in the Fall-Winter 1993 issue of the Fifth Estate. We never lose a writer.

Snow Day
Willow Page Delp
The Amazine, 2023
theamazine.com

MK ZARIEL

You stare at oblivion or maybe just at your social life–a sky darkening from blue to black, a group of college students fighting over foraged meals, a building decaying–and wonder what to believe.

This is a snow day, but something more, too, a bonding experience that can only shatter and release you. When you belong somewhere, or maybe more often when you don't, "things [have] to erupt."

This vignette, seemingly just an exaggeration of teenage awkwardness and isolation, is the concept behind Willow Page Delp's short story published by the independent literary magazine *The Amazine*, *Snow Day* is half friendship story and half horror, exploring the way interpersonal dynamics bend and break under duress.

Delp frames it as "an unsettling short story about a sudden snowstorm hitting a reclusive boarding school for gifted students, and the two female friends at the heart of the mystery," a description that also elucidates the rest of their body of work, mainly short stories centering on marginality, embodiment, and external horror symbolizing internal pain.

While lacking the gore of traditional horror, *Snow Day* is arguably even more chilling, showing the way that human beings have the most to fear–and embrace–from one another.

The story begins with an idyllic yet chilling scene in which Piper, the protagonist, wakes up in the cold despite generally running warm, reflecting on the extreme nature of the weather. Meanwhile, her friend Opal simply denies the reality of the situation, with her head "tilted in a slight defiance, as if daring the sky to have the audacity to argue."

This subtle antithesis sets up the character foil between the two young women, with Piper taking an observant stance toward the world and Opal opting for a more confrontational way of living. However, in its centering on these characters, this story subtly dismantles relationship hierarchy. Rather than a romantic partnership or family, Piper and Opal find the most profound kinship in their platonic friendship.

Thus, Delp's portrayal of these characters echoes Swedish author Andie Norgrren's theory of relationship anarchy, showing that the most unbounded forms of care are the most meaningful.

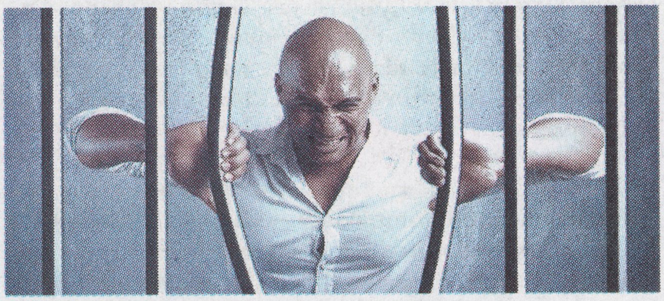
After a while, their community devolves into a perfect storm–shouting matches, inclement weather, darkened skies, and occasional physical aggression. When a fellow student of hers grows aggressive, Opal reflects dramatically on the situation: "There was no time when Lila had thrown Daisy out of the window, into a bed of snow, there was a before and after. It was their own equivalent of BCE–Before Daisy. It was a storm of chaos, lightning splitting the dorms."

As the conflict escalates and Piper and Opal are forced to escape together, the weather becomes almost secondary. The real horror show is not the snow, but the coldness of their peers' relationships. Thus, Delp makes the point that care, not physical comfort, is the objective measure of safety and meaning.

The shortest story I've ever reviewed, *Snow Day* is also the text that's stuck with me the longest, thanks to its simple grace and wholesome form of horror. Delp's words are a reminder of the power that platonic kinship holds, even in the face of unimaginable terrors (or bad weather or fascism, as the case may be).

As the protagonists end the story with a declaration that " [they] "jumped together, into the dark," so, too, can readers, hurtling toward the unknown of life while still feeling safe, not due to any artificial conception of normalcy, but solely due to belonging.

mk zariel {it/its + masc terms} is a transmasculine neuroqueer poet, movement journalist, and BashBack aligned anarchist translocally rooted in the Great Lakes region. The author of *Voidgazing* (2026, Whittle Micropress). Its offerings, commissions, and chaotic love letters to the world are at mkzariel.carrd.co.



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Filmmaker Clifton Ariwakehte Nicholas (rt) at the wall in Palestine.

Walls, Fences & Resistance

Settler Colonialism from Turtle Island to Palestine

FRANKLIN LÓPEZ AND CLIFTON ARIWAKEHTE NICHOLAS

When we talk about settler colonialism, we're not just recounting the past, we're describing a system that is alive and expanding today.

It's important to break down the terms: colonialism today often means invading a place to extract resources—a mine, a plantation, an oil field — before retreating. Canadian companies, for instance, loot minerals from Latin America and Africa, but when the mine runs dry, no "New Canada" pops up in Ghana or Guatemala. The colonizers take and leave.

Settler colonialism is different. It's about permanent occupation. It's about pushing Indigenous peoples off their lands, erasing their presence, and replacing them with settlers to populate, police, and profit from the land. That's the story of Turtle Island and the story of Palestine.

In our upcoming documentary, "A Red Road to the West Bank," we, Clifton Ariwakehte Nicholas (Kanien'kehá:ka from Kanehsatà:ke) and Franklin López of Amplifier Films), explore these deep, often painful parallels between Indigenous resistance on Turtle Island and Palestinian resistance under occupation.

Many of the insights that ground our understanding come from Gord Hill, an anarchist, artist, and historian from the Kwakwaka'wakw nation, who we interview for the film. In that conversation, Gord broke down how settler colonialism operates in phases. First, there is military conquest. in North America, massacres, broken treaties, and scorched-earth campaigns; in Palestine, bombings, mass expulsions, and apartheid walls.

Then comes containment. In Canada, Indigenous peoples were confined to reserves, their movement controlled by a brutal pass system. Today, Palestinians must navigate Israeli checkpoints and permit systems just to move across their own fragmented territory. Gaza, walled off and besieged, is a modern reservation under military siege.

In Clifton's home community of Kanehsatà:ke, fences now separate the people from the town of Oka and the golf course that still symbolizes colonial encroachment—a wound opened wide during the 1990 Oka Crisis, a 78-day armed standoff when the Canadian military laid siege to Kanehsatà:ke after community members tried to stop the golf course expansion that desecrated their graveyard.

Assimilation and erasure follow. Residential schools and forced adoptions sought to "kill the Indian in the child." In Palestine, education and history are rewritten to deny Palestinian existence and heritage. Languages, cultures, and ways of life are systematically attacked.

In both struggles, resistance is criminalized. Indigenous land defenders on Turtle Island are labeled extremists; Palestinians resisting occupation are branded as terrorists. These labels are not just rhetorical, they are used to justify raids, arrests, surveillance, and the crushing of movements for liberation.

Settler colonialism on Turtle Island has been grinding forward for over 500 years in Palestine. It has been 77 years since the Nakba. Different timelines, but the same machine of dispossession.

With "A Red Road to the West Bank," we aim not just to highlight these connections, but to forge solidarity across struggles. To show that walls, fences, passes, and prisons are all part of a global colonial system and that liberation anywhere helps crack its foundations everywhere.

The film is currently in development. We are fundraising to complete this project and bring these vital stories to a broader audience. You can check out clips from the film and support the project at amplifierfilms.ca/redroad.

Franklin López is a Puerto Rican anarchist filmmaker based in so-called Canada. He runs Amplifier Films and previously founded subMedia.

Clifton Ariwakehte Nicholas is a Kanien'kehá:ka activist, filmmaker, and land defender from Kanehsatà:ke, and a lifelong anarchist committed to Indigenous self-determination.

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Singing together helps make a revolution

Let's Sing Like the Wobblies!

The Popular Wobbly: Selected Writings of T-Bone Slim
T-Bone Slim, Edited by Owen Clayton and Iain McIntyre
Foreword by David R. Roediger
University of Minnesota Press, 2025

DAVID ROVICS

There's a new book out which should be of interest to all fans of poignant and witty anecdotes, whether or not they're interested in history or in union organizing, and whether or not they've ever experienced police brutality, prison, or poverty. But for those who appreciate the written word, who have an interest in history or in union organizing, and especially for those among us who have ever gone to bed hungry and broke, this book will provide you with sustenance of all kinds.

It's the story of T-Bone Slim, born Matti Valentin Huhta (1880-1942), a Finnish -American writer, humorist, poet, songwriter, hobo, and labor radical active with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

The Popular Wobbly, edited by scholars Owen Clayton and Iain McIntyre, brings to our attention to the writing of T-Bone, the most widely-read contributor in the 1920s and 1930s to the publications of the IWW, known affectionately as the Wobblies. There's an introduction and footnotes that do an excellent job of making sense of the many fairly obscure references that most of us who weren't hopping freight trains during the early 20th century wouldn't otherwise get.

Particularly at the beginning of T-Bone Slim's time as the most prolific contributor to the IWW's newspapers, the anti-immigrant hysteria being whipped up by the Congress and in the corporate press was at a particular height. Replace the word Italian with Mexican and it will all seem very much like it does now, over a century after the passage of the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and other similar racist and exclusionary federal legislation.

Here's T-Bone, writing in 1923:

"Last year 40,000 Italians came to this country; 53,000 went back. Fifteen thousand Americans, in the same period, had the temerity to commit suicide and dodge all this prosperity. . ."

From this quote alone, it's easy to see how much this Finnish-American hobo's humor was so widely appreciated when he was writing. Pretty much every sentence shines with this kind of bleak brilliance. It's equally easy to see why his writing is not widely read today since most people lack the historical knowledge to easily and readily make sense of a lot of it, helpful footnotes notwithstanding.

T-Bone Slim could be said to be a perfect representation of one of the most famous quotes of the most famous Wobbly, his fellow Scandinavian radical, the martyred Joe Hill, when he commented that a pamphlet is read once and then thrown away, but a song lasts forever. The book's title comes from a very funny song T-Bone wrote which was meant to be sung to the tune of another song that was well-known at the time.

I'm as mild-mannered man as can be
Ain't done nobody harm that I can see
Still on me they put a ban, they threw me in the can
They went wild, simply wild, over me

This was my introduction to T- Bone Slim four decades ago, and many other folk singers who got their introduction to history from people like Pete Seeger and Utah Phillips can say the same thing.

Without making any undue efforts to reach for contemporary relevance, it strikes me that T-Bone's writings, mostly little vignettes about life as an itinerant worker, have a lot in common with the short-form videos so many people watch today.

It's easy to imagine people reading the IWW's *Industrial Worker* newspaper in the 1920s and being as entertained as someone might be with a short YouTube video today. And, it's equally easy to imagine people in the 1920s being as mystified by a contemporary Tiktok as many people today might be mystified

by the humor of the bygone era. This is only because of the lack of context people on either end would have with the other time period, not because the basic phenomenon of laughing together at the state of affairs we find ourselves in has changed dramatically.

Another song from 1923, which any service industry worker struggling to pay for rent and health care today should relate to immediately:

We are the horse that is to be pastured. All our lives we have worked for "living wages, and no more." Now we can start to earn dying wages.

There is something so much larger, though, than Slim as an individual writer which this book speaks to in so many ways as it focuses on the role of writing, and culture generally, in building, sustaining, and educating a social movement.

It's hard to imagine in the U.S. or many other parts of the world today a union or radical organization employing the work of a writer like T-Bone Slim so consistently putting out publications that are so full of such humorous anecdotes, cartoons, songs, and artwork, like IWW publications were back in his era.

Most current publications feature mainly serious articles, with little or no poetry or creative writing. Similarly, protests today are full of angry speeches, entirely lacking any music or other artistic elements, or any humor. It's hard to imagine a contemporary radical group singing songs together, perhaps these days even out of fear of appropriating someone else's culture.

Once upon a time, though, working class culture was widely embraced, and promulgated by working class institutions and networks of all kinds, such as the IWW. The deep embrace of using writing, art, music and other forms of culture as tools for organizing, educating, and building the union is one of the things the IWW was most known for back in T-Bone's day. This may be a big part of the reason why the union had such a tremendous impact on the world, pioneering so many tactics and promoting so many ideas which have remained relevant ever since.

So many of the other social movements that followed the IWW in the 20th century which had a profound impact on society were also the ones that produced the most artistic expression, from the Depression-era movements of the 1930s to the profoundly influential Civil Rights and antiwar movements of the 1960s, the global justice movement of the beginning of this century, among others.

I have been a musician and writer very intentionally following in the footsteps of people like T-Bone Slim and Joe Hill for the past forty years or so in the US as well as performing in a couple dozen other countries. There's absolutely no question, from my experience, that the organizations, networks, and social movements that have any chance of succeeding are the ones which deeply embrace culture, and

David Rovics singing at a rally in London

intentionally use it to build, to sustain, educate, and foster a powerful sense of belonging, community, and mutual understanding. Equally, there is no question that the movements that ignore or shun culture fade away and die quickly.

Today, you will find more live music at a rally for a politician like Trump than you will at a protest against war or mass deportations. This, in itself, should terrify everyone with a knowledge of history, or any understanding of human psychology.

Bring back the spirit of T-Bone Slim!

David Rovics is a singer/songwriter and anarchist based in Portland, Oregon. David tours regularly in North America, Europe, and Australia, playing at protests, festivals, squatted social centers and folk clubs. He has recorded dozens of albums and has millions of his songs streamed every year. His writing and podcasting can be found on Substack and other platforms. davidrovics.com

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ALL POWER TO THE IMAGINATION!

Not So Comic Criminalization

Down By Law: Criminalization, Solidarity and Survival in Europe
Edited by the Crimscapes Research Group
PM Press/Kairos, 2025

PAUL BUHLE

Graphic novels (GN) and anthologies very often reflect personal experiences, and for that matter, the non-fiction shelf is comparatively thin. The GN treatment of homeless and semi-homeless people, even amidst the world-wide explosion of that hard-hit slice of humanity, remains almost invisible.

Down By Law is a collaborative graphic novel bearing the imprint of Kairos and its series editor, erstwhile Yugoslavian dissident anarcho-syndicalist Andrej Grubacic, has a usefully different idea. Its editors want to track and explain "criminalization as a tool of governance." The abnormal, the morally unacceptable, the unwanted—all these have become more common in the social crises of our time, and more criminalized. Laws seeking to protect the vulnerable, but carried out by existing law enforcement agencies, turn out to be something different. Social controls cannot guard us against the reality of Capital.

The stories within the book are an artistic creation, fact and near-fact narratives, from the work of research groups across Europe. Comics, clearly, are now rightly perceived as an effective way to get the stories across to popular audiences. Indeed, the studious reader may want to look first to the back pages because the ten (!) contributors, artists and (mostly) cultural anthropologists, seek to explain in personal as well as political ways, how their collective contributions deal with the social crisis at hand. They are mostly young, equal numbers of women and men, and their own lives, briefly and modestly described, almost tell the story themselves.

Some of these are, in several page chunks, nearly wordless. "It's OK to Cry: Doing Time in a Women's Prison in Germany" by Friederike Faust, Valerie Assman and Jan Peuckert, transfers the experience of isolation onto paper. When we finally learn of the person's actual crime, it is clear that her parents died in the 1990s Balkan wars and in struggling to survive, she has committed online fraud.

We grasp her urgent aspiration of the moment, to be in an "open prison," reunited with her baby, and also one step closer to release. Her behavior during imprisonment is so closely restricted that the problem of several others in the book becomes clear: she dare not make a single mistake, not even a moment of non-violent playfulness with a fellow inmate. Disapproval brings swift punishment, a terrible setback at that moment in a stressed life.

Here, then, even a happy ending is likely to have fearful qualities. In "Quicksand" by Agata Dziban and Aleksandra Sasza," Stachwska is the narrative of a twenty-year sex worker. Leaving poverty and danger in Ukraine, she tries work in a Polish factory, is discharged and deported, and then hears from a friend that sex work is "OK," better than the alternatives.

She works in a large Polish brothel, making just enough to send money home to her children. Free rent becomes a major inducement to the life. Dodging police raids, getting money to the kids in Poland and then bringing them to her, she and her workmates create a working collective with good spirit among themselves. And then, in the last panel, comes the war in Ukraine. No happy ending.

"The Date" by Juulia Kela and H-P Lehkonen treats the effects, intended and otherwise, of Finnish laws that seek to protect sex partners through punishments of those who do not disclose their HIV status. The authorities claim to protect the vulnerable. The legal definitions are so vague, their use in the courtroom so liable to misinterpretation, that not even the emergence of new medication to prevent spread of the virus makes much difference.

Others forced into exile learn, for instance, from graffiti, that "Bosnians are Subhuman." That is, themselves. That Africans fleeing poverty via the Mediterranean are definitely disposable, despite the efforts (sometimes successful) by NGO activists to save them

"The assumption is that treating poor people kindly would set the wrong incentive" might be taken as the effective generalization of this volume with the consequence four pages later, "These penalties create confinement and isolation" rather than what a society would presumably want.

The false solution is time-old, and also the source of some of the finest anarchist writing from at least the mid-19th century onward. Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, Malatesta and Emma Goldman, to name only a few, pondered the roles of punishment and especially imprisonment for crime.

Surrealists famously called for armies to be abolished and prison doors to be opened. If class society is responsible for mass suffering, then mutual aid is the only solution. Unlike educational reform or the establishment of utopian communities, anarchists had few opportunities to enact law enforcement or prison reforms. But their testimony reached many people including prison reformers.

A comic worth enjoying, pondering, and passing on.

Paul Buhle has edited fifteen nonfiction, historical comics since *WOBBLIES!* in 2005, and is working with Raymond Tyler and Noah Van Sciver on a graphic novel history of anarchism. He lives in Providence, R.I.

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The State Is Not My Lover

CORALINE JAMES

if it dies I will not shed a tear.
I don't really know her or what she wants from me,
the men who made her, or how I'm supposed to live here-
sweltering in a chaos
that ain't for my
sake.
Unwilling as I am to bear the responsibility
of accumulated force.

Collective destiny can only be spread so thin.
Before I reach for the knife-
To cut off the other twisted wing
and plummet
all the way back to the sweet earth.

They're flying us somewhere
and I did not elect to go right into the mad eye of
the sun

In The State my momma don't love me-
I am never enough
Laying down looking at the clouds
certain of my calculus that to survive here would
cost me bails of my dignity
an amount of my humanity that I could not do to expel

Coraline James Seksinsky is a musician, writer, and begrudging worker who's lived the vast majority of her life in Cheshire County, New Hampshire. Currently, she resides in middle Tennessee with her boyfriend in an old farmhouse.

From Cop City to the Dakota pipelines and Jane's Revenge to numerous struggles worldwide, anarchist organizers are relentlessly targeted by the state today as they have been for over a century.

We respond with mutual aid and solidarity

KATHY E. FERGUSON

Shadows in the Struggle for Equality: The History of the Anarchist Red Cross

Boris Yelensky

Edited with a new Foreword & Introduction by Matthew Hart. Illustrated by N.O. Bonzo. PM Press, 2025

Russian immigrant and revolutionary Boris Yelensky wrote this moving account of the Anarchist Red Cross (ARC) and related prisoner aid societies in Russia, the U.S., and Europe from the 19th century to the end of World War II. This book is a welcome affirmation for contemporary anarchist prison support groups, whose noble history is documented here.

It was first published by the Alexander Berkman Aid Fund in 1958.

Yelensky was born in Russia in 1889. He participated in the 1905 revolution there, afterwards fleeing to the U.S. where he co-organized the Philadelphia branch of the Anarchist Red Cross. When he and his wife Bessie moved to Chicago, they joined the Chicago branch of the ARC, a thriving organization with over 300 members.

Anarchists did not forget their own. Yelensky's goal is to encourage others to "extend aid to the imprisoned, persecuted and impoverished comrades wherever they may be found." The ARC saw prisoner aid as a form of mutual aid, working with imprisoned and exiled anarchists to help them survive state attacks. It was not just giving charity, but fostering their movement by supporting their most endangered comrades.

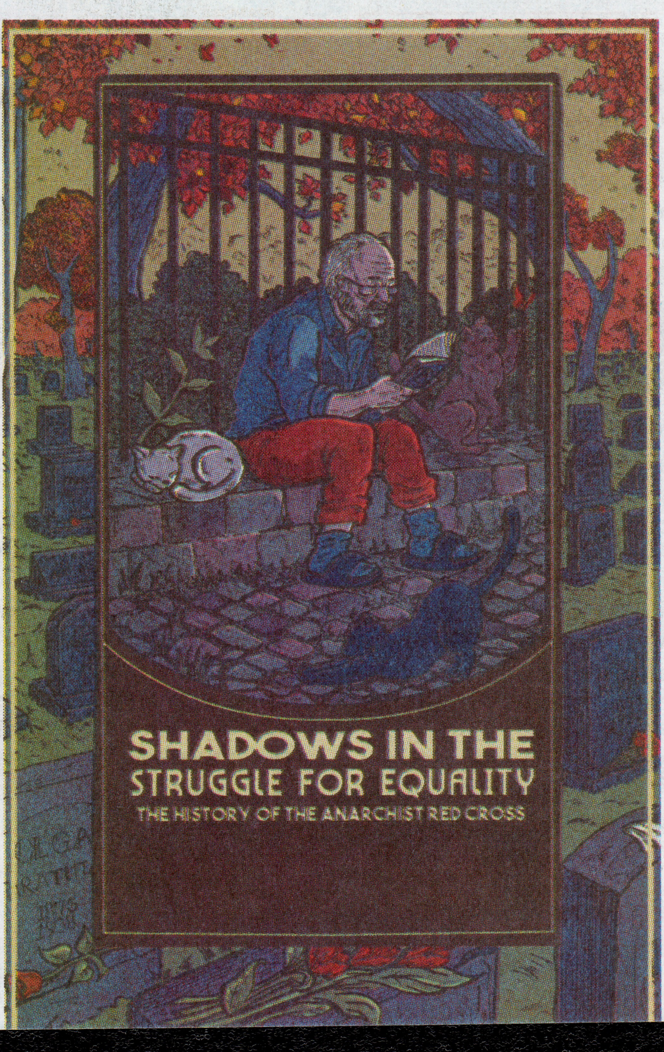
The new material in the 2025 edition is provided by Matthew Hart and N.O. Bonzo. Hart is a teacher and labor organizer from Los Angeles who helped re-establish the LA chapter of the Anarchist Black Cross in 1968. He has written a useful Foreword about Yelensky's place and time, and provided an update of ARC activities, primarily in England, the U.S., Spain, and a few other countries. He has also provided four new appendixes and a fascinating and informative set of footnotes documenting and expanding Yelensky's accounts.

The new edition is illustrated by N.O. Bonzo, a printmaker and illustrator who provides seventeen magnificent portraits, drawn with the artist's characteristic William Morris-inspired appeal, of women and men from the prisoner aid movement.

These accounts are sometimes confusing because the organizations go through periodic name changes: some call themselves the Anarchist Black Cross. Earlier groups were named the Joint Committee for the Defense of the Revolutionaries Imprisoned in Russia, and, after 1936, the Alexander Berkman Aid Fund. For ease of reading, I am calling the whole movement by the name used in the book's title, the Anarchist Red Cross.

The overriding theme of this book is the sheer volume of need there is and has been for supporting anarchists imprisoned by, and families rendered impoverished by, various state regimes: Tsarist Russia; Bolshevik Russia; fascist Germany, Italy, and Spain; and various supposedly democratic regimes.

The most heart-breaking of these murderous regimes, to these activist communities, was the Bolsheviks. There had been so much enthusiasm when many anarchists, including Yelensky, returned to Russia in 1917 to work for



The most heart-breaking of these murderous regimes was the Bolsheviks. There had been so much enthusiasm when many anarchists returned to Russia in 1917 to work for the revolution. Their hopes were bitterly dashed.

the revolution. Their hopes were bitterly dashed.

In Yelensky's words: "More than 90% of those who went back were later to die in the Bolshevik terror." The Anarchist Red Cross was "quickly criminalized in the Soviet Union" where the new regime, themselves adept at underground tactics, ruthlessly targeted their former comrades.

The ARC assumed that, with the overthrow of the Tsar, there was no further need for prisoner aid in Russia. Yet they soon were back where they started. After leaving Russia in December of 1921, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman and Alexander Schapiro "made an appeal to the world to aid those comrades who were suffering under the Bolshevik regime." The movement ground back into action.

A second theme is the predictable, yet discouraging, conflicts among Left groups about the delivery of aid. There was an ongoing struggle with Social Democrats, who regularly excluded anarchists from receiving aid even if it was contributed by anarchist groups. In the end, only anarchists themselves could consistently be relied upon to get aid to anarchist prisoners. Even so, Berkman was a strong advocate for supporting all the radicals in prison, not just avowed anarchists.

In Appendix 4, Hart provides a sample of correspondence about this question between Berkman and Lillie Sarnoff of the New York Anarchist Red Cross. Berkman points out that imprisoned anarchists "*share* the things they receive" and insists that their aid work should not be based on approval of the particular political positions of the incarcerated radicals.

A third theme is the continuing importance of ARC publications. They never stopped trying to educate the public. The Joint Committee for the Defense of the Revolutionaries Imprisoned in Russia (Berkman, Goldman, and Rudolf Rocker) published the *Bulletin of the Relief Fund of International Working Men's Association for Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists Imprisoned or Exiled in Russia.* The London ARC published *Hilf-Ruf (The Call to Aid) – an organ of the Anarchist Red Cross,* written half in Yiddish and half in Russian. Many of the Jewish groups published material in *Freie Arbeiter Stimme.*

The movement generated at least three books (besides this one). Morris Beresin, who was imprisoned in Siberia after the 1905 revolution, escaped and came to the U.S., where he wrote *From Chains to Freedom: Notes from a Fugitive Political Hard-Labor Convict.* Berkman assembled *Letters from Russian Prisons* in 1925. Gregory Maximoff wrote *The Guillotine at Work: Twenty Years of Terror in Russia,* which started off as a pamphlet, but came in at 624 pages when it was published in 1940 by the Alexander Berkman Fund in Chicago.

Hart's account shows that, when the Anarchist Red Cross returned in the 1970s and 1980s, their publishing commitments continued. The London ARC published *The Black Flag*; the Chicago group published the *ABC Bulletin*; the Melbourne group published *Acracia* and later *Black and Blue.* They were always teaching.

A fourth implicit theme is the nuts and bolts of the activists' work. They were very hands on. They were not just writing checks. They were all volunteers so none of the funds went to administration. They raised money in the usual anarchist ways: benefit concerts; personal appeals to unions and fraternal organizations; films, outings, and lectures; sale of literature; and subscription lists.

Riffing on the common anarchist practice of themed dances, they invented the Arestantin [Prisoner's] Ball, including costume contests and elaborate tableaux re-enacting scenes of oppression and resistance. People who themselves had little to spare contributed willingly and repeatedly to these activities.

>>>>>>>>>

Julie in Oak Park, Mich.

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They wrote personal letters to starving and frightened people, establishing bonds and providing a lifeline. They published prisoners' letters. They sent specific items that prisoners needed: food, clothing, medicine. After learning that a lot of the imprisoned anarchists were learning new languages to pass the time, they sent dictionaries. People delivering the aid took great risks, especially in Bolshevik Russia. They often had to travel to distant prisons and camps and risk their own arrest to deliver much-needed packages.

Hart's supplement tells the story of Albert Meltzer and Stuart Christie bringing back the movement in London in 1967. It revived soon after in Europe and the U.S. The renewed London ARC was a cross-generational organizing site. Hart writes: "The group acted as a hub where generations of anarchists and revolutionaries came together to share ideas, theories, and strategies for changing society in a fundamental way. In many ways it helped the older generation pass the baton to the next generation." This is a fascinating glimpse into the daily work of the movement, and I long for more.

Yelenksy is a skilled storyteller. Yet, I wish he had included more detail about women's contribution to the prisoner aid projects. We know, for instance, that Bessie Yelensky was secretary of the Chicago ARC group, but nothing about what she thought or did. Hart notes that Bessie's activism "was just as significant" as Boris's, but we can't actually tell. Since they were life partners, Boris must have known about Bessie's work, but it is not included in his account. Hart focuses more on major confrontations with authorities and ensuing court battles, rather than activist process. I wish he had said more about what the groups did, not just what they were accused of.

Yelensky was determined that the indefatigable labor of anarchists in organizing mutual aid for prisoners would not be forgotten, nor would the great hopes they had for social transformation.

Looking back at the process of writing his book, Yelensky mused, "It has also been pleasant to recollect the enthusiastic activity that existed in so many cities during the old days of the Anarchist Red Cross. There was so much willingness during that period to sacrifice a part of one's life in order to help those comrades who needed assistance in prisons and places of exile." Yelensky was aware that others had revived the movement, and determined to help them make a go of it by sharing earlier activists' experiences.

Hart rightly notes, "He devoted a lifetime to help build a better world and to form and sustain an international chain of assistance for the oppressed."

Kathy E. Ferguson teaches political science and women's studies at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa. She is currently writing a book on all the anarchist women who weren't Emma Goldman.

Fighting on the Mexican Side

Gringo Rebels from the Saint Patrick's Battalion to the Wobblies

FRAN SHOR

Even before taking office, the incoming Trump Administration began discussing the possibility of American military intervention in Mexico to suppress that country's drug cartels.

While shockingly brazen, it is not without precedent. The U.S. has a history of imperial intrusion in Mexico in the 19th and 20th centuries. There have also been instances where recent immigrants and U.S. citizens fought alongside Mexicans who opposed not only American intervention, but also sought to bring about a revolution. At the same time, there were instances where immigrants and U.S. citizens fought alongside Mexican forces that not only opposed American intervention, but also sought to bring about a revolution.

From the Mexican-American War of the 19th century (1845-1848) to the Baja Revolution of the early 20th (1911-1912), *gringo* rebels aligned themselves with Mexicans to either combat the American military or to overturn the rule of Wall Street and its Mexican enablers.

During the Mexican War, a contingent of mostly recent Irish immigrants who had been recruited by the U.S. army, deserted the imperial invasion to join with the Mexican military defense. In the case of the Baja Revolution, members

of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), especially members of Wobbly locals in California, crossed into Mexico to become part of an insurgency to overthrow the dictator, Porfirio Diaz.

Although different circumstances and motivations compelled these *gringo* rebels to fight on the Mexican side, their commitments reveal insights into contesting imperialism and constructing revolutionary change.

The imperial expansion of the U.S. slave republic into Mexican territory was first realized with the establishment of the Republic of Texas in 1836. By the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1845, the Texas population consisted of 100,000 non-slave and 38,000 enslaved inhabitants. In that year, the War Department directed Gen. Zachary Taylor, a future U.S. President, and slave-owning plantation landlord and battle-tested officer of the genocidal Indian Wars, to leave Louisiana and encamp with thousands of troops to Corpus Christi, Texas, and from there go to Matamoros, Mexico.

Some of Taylor's soldiers deserted to Mexico. One of them was John Reilly, a former British soldier from Ireland who organized what became Saint Patrick's Battalion (or, in Spanish, the *San Patricios*) and fought alongside the Mexican army. Many members of the brigade were recent Catholic immigrants, primarily although not exclusively, from Ireland. Given the anti-Catholicism rampant in the U.S. and especially evident among Protestant military officers, Irish Catholic soldiers were targets for harsh treatment and discrimination. In addition, the Texas frontiersmen, known for their vicious campaigns against the Comanche and Mexicans, piled on their prejudicial hatred of Irish and Mexican Catholics.

By August 1846, Reilly had gathered over 200 *San Patricios.* Sickened by the attacks on civilians and encouraged by Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna to "come over to us" and experience true "Christian hospitality," the *San Patricios* became adept at deploying the limited supply of Mexican artillery in several critical engagements with the American military.

Their last battle in August 1847 at the Churubusco Monastery near Mexico City, led to the death and capture of the majority of the Battalion members. John Reilly was among them. While spared the death penalty (since his desertion happened before the official declaration of war), he endured terrible torture, languishing in prison until the signing of the Treaty of Hidalgo in June 1848.

While denounced as traitors by the U.S. military and proponents of an imperial Manifest Destiny, Reilly and the Saint Patrick Battalion achieved grateful recognition for fighting on the Mexican side. Today, the Battalion is revered in both Mexico and Ireland although is an unknown chapter in American history.

Their memory has been restored most recently in David Rovics' song honoring the Battalion and their treason in its lyrics is one of his most requested number. There is a statue of Reilly in his birthplace of Clifden, Ireland and a bust of Reilly was placed in Mexico City's San Angel Plaza, courtesy of Ireland.

Although U.S. troops left Mexico City at the conclusion of the war, U.S. capital continued to spread its tentacles throughout Mexico. By 1900, US capitalists owned one-quarter of all arable Mexican land. By 1910, over half of all American foreign investment went to Mexico. Well-known robber barons, from Gould to Guggenheim to Rockefeller, controlled the country's railroads, mines, and oil.

From the late 19th through the first decade of the 20th century, Diaz, a corrupt and oppressive enabler of U.S. imperial interests, ruled Mexico with an iron hand. Resistance to the dictatorial regime came from several quarters.

Among the most radical critics of Diaz and U.S. capitalists were the anarchists Flores Magón brothers, Ricardo, Enrique and Jesús, with their newspaper, *Regeneracion,* first published in 1900. While Ricardo, in particular, suffered imprisonment in Mexico and the U.S., the Magón brothers, nonetheless, attracted allies from among other U.S.-based radicals and organizations, such

>>>>>>>

mayflies

FIEVEL

mayflies dead on the streets of Selma
mayflies dead on the Edmund Pettus Bridge
David and I are there to remember
to pay our respects, to see
but everywhere we look
the streets and sidewalks are covered
with drifts of mayfly carcasses
heaps of translucent white wings
uncountable numbers of corpses
we try not to step on them
it's all but impossible
we walk with a sickening crunch
across that weighty bridge
emerging on the other side
two white people unscathed
on a field of the dead

18 April 2025
Charlottesville VA

Fievel (they/them). Queer anarchist non-binary radio host, podcaster, poet, fomenter of unrest. Most things atjasoncrane.org.

Las soldaderas, rebel women, in the Mexican Revolution led troops into combat.

sent 20,000 soldiers, nearly a quarter of the entire U.S. army to the Mexican border in California and Texas. Harrison Gray Otis, the notorious anti-union publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, and owner of thousands of acres of Mexican land, lobbied Taft to intervene in support of Diaz. However, other forces in both countries backed the Mexican bourgeois reformer, Francisco Madero, who eventually ousted Diaz in late May 1911.

As anarchists, Ricardo Flores Magón as well as the IWW were not interested in mere reforms. As Ricardo wrote in his "Manifesto to the Workers of the World" (reprinted in the Wobbly newspaper, *Solidarity*): "For more than four months the Red Flag has flown on the battlefields of Mexico, carried aloft by emancipated workers" who opposed the "continuance of social inequality, the capitalist system, the division of the human family into two classes–that of the exploiter and that of the exploited." The objective of those exploited argued Magón was to "expropriate the land and the means of production and hand them over to the people."

By the end of June 1911, with Mexican and US troops arrayed against them, a number of the IWW contingent, including Joe Hill, managed to escape the clutches of the Mexican *federales* and the U.S. military. However, most of Hill's fellow Wobblies were not as lucky. They faced immediate arrest at the California-Mexican border.

Ricardo Flores Magón experienced intermittent imprisonment, finally dying in Leavenworth federal prison in 1922, a victim like many others, including the leadership of the IWW, for the charge of "obstructing the war effort," a primary component of the 1917 Espionage Act.

Nevertheless, the banner of *Regeneracion* for *tierra y Libertad* (land and freedom) would inspire other Mexican revolutionaries, including Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata. Once again, the U.S. military intervened to attempt to forestall revolution and to protect oil interests. And, once again, *gringo* rebels aided their Mexican allies, either as soldiers in Villa's and Zapata's forces or among the IWW and anarcho-syndicalist oil workers. Mexico also became a refuge for anarchists like Sacco and Vanzetti fleeing from the World War I draft instituted in April 1917.

On one hand, given the history of U S imperial arrogance and Trump's own racism and misogyny, especially with a left-wing Jewish woman now occupying the office of the President of Mexico, such aggression from *El Norte* might come to pass.

On the other, we should take inspiration from those *gringo* rebels who fought on the Mexican side. If not actually taking up arms in defense of Mexico, the least we can do is resist any effort to militarily intervene in that country.

Fran Shor is a scholar, lecturer, and long-time peace and justice activist in the Detroit area. He is the author of one novel and six non-fiction books of social-cultural history. His most recent book is *Pursuing Peace and Justice: A Memoir... of Sorts.*

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photo: Laurie LePain Kopack

Fredy Perlman's Chronicle of the World Changers

DAVID WATSON

Forty years after his untimely death in 1985, Fredy Perlman's last work has been published, a second volume of his novel, *The Strait,* which he left in handwritten form.

In 1986, the anarchist activist/historian (and FE contributor) David Porter commented in the journal *Kairos* on Perlman's contribution to anarchist ideas, identifying a central, unifying concern in the work as "the obstacles, inhibitions, and illusions that prevent genuine social liberation." Although Fredy had begun with a critique of capital as the "overall framework for domination and self-repression in the modern era," he continued, "Fredy's special talent was to demonstrate the variety of its political forms," a dialectic he described in his essays and, books, in which "accumulation of unequal power leads to the privilege of a few and the degradation of the others." Moreover, resisting tended to produce its own feedback: "Every major step toward apparent liberation produces further domination…."

This had led to a longer view, back to the earliest empires and the roots of domination and extractivism. Mistrusting even revolutionary theory, Fredy turned to storytelling. In *The Strait, Book One, Obenabi's Songs,* which he started in 1977, he sought to recreate the worldview of Woodland Native Americans confronting the invasion of conquistadores, clerics, and confidence men from the east. He not only described Native non-hierarchical societies; "the language and syntax of the presentation itself [were] an attempt to articulate non-Western consciousness through the poetic imagery of that culture."

In 1983, plagued by a serious heart problem, Fredy feared he wouldn't finish his story, as told by a primal person, of what he called the "world changers" and world destroyers. He laid out his vision of the history of this world in his rapidly written *Against His-story, Against Leviathan!* This vertiginous rant against history and the domination of nature and human communities seems to be delivered by a clairvoyant, well-read grandmother from prehistory, now speaking at the end of time's arc, looking back at the wreckage of history like Walter Benjamin's famous angel, and forward toward tentative next steps out of the nightmare.

In this extraordinary, idiosyncratic soliloquy, Fredy's narrator describes the "monstrous body" of Leviathan (a term taken from Thomas Hobbes's apologetic for the State and its Leader), our repressive civilization that has unleashed a "widening gyre" of terror and destruction over millennia, its "ignorant armies" clashing by day and night. This is "the Beast's body," a kind of vast, mechanical worm. "For it does have a body, a body that has become more powerful than the Biosphere. It may be a body without any life of its own. It may be a dead thing, a huge cadaver. It may move its slow thighs only when living beings inhabit it. Nevertheless, its body is what does the wrecking."

This tragedy begins with enslavement and mass deportations carried out by ancient Fertile Crescent empires, continuing to the Trail of Tears and—let us not forget, since these recent chapters were Fredy's concern as well—the modern mass deportations and killings during his lifetime and ours, including in the Middle East now.

Fredy's anti-history soon gained and continues to gain admirers and has been translated into several languages. One -worthy reflection on *Against History* is Max Cafard's "The Dragons of Brno," in the Spring 1996 Fifth Estate. Echoing

Porter, Cafard writes, "Fredy Perlman's diagnosis for our own age sounds at first rather dismal. History seems to become a Night of the Living Dead, with the hapless humans cowering before the advancing lifeless Creatures … Moreover, as the monster destroys the social fabric, the 'human communities, once dead, stay dead.'" This was written before AI. Now, our very words and stories seemed threatened with melting away, to be reconfigured as grist for the leviathanic machine-worm, when, as Fredy put it, "the Beast becomes its own sole [and our own and only] frame of reference." >>>>>

Others have noticed the despair in Fredy's sweeping late works on Leviathan—indeed, two central literary references in *Against His-story* on ignorant armies and the widening gyre, from iconic poems by Matthew Arnold and Yeats, were singularly pessimistic, crepuscular. "Yet, we should not despair," Cafard urges us. "The good news is that the entire Monster is beginning to destroy itself, and there is hope for a new beginning, for regeneration." And he insists, "let's begin again. The Earth does it every year. And the human community can do it occasionally, too." Thirty years later it has become a popular meme that the good news is frequently, alas, also bad news. But as Cafard concludes, "If we do survive our encounter with the Beast, Fredy Perlman will have helped us find our Way…."

After finishing *Against His-story,* Fredy returned to and nearly completed his project to depict the story of the catastrophic effects of the world-changers on the original communities around the Great Lakes and Tiosa Rondion, the colonial outpost that became Detroit. Among many other themes, his family saga incorporates the deadly impact of capitalism and technology, the subsequent pulverization and dispersal of once stateless communities, and perhaps especially, in the words of his life-partner and biographer Lorraine Perlman, "the hazards of one speaking to many and, of course, [of] saviors who claim to protect their followers from all of the above."

The first volume, treating the early contact, was published posthumously in 1988. This second volume, *The Strait 2,* was also largely written when he died, though a couple of key sections needed completion.

A few years after Fredy's death, Lorraine took the handwritten chapters of the second volume with her on an extended visit to France and transcribed them on a manual typewriter. After that, the text sat for decades. In 2023, she decided to return to the project and retyped it on a computer, completing a couple of sections based on Fredy's extensive notes, doing so with as light a hand as possible. Fifth Estate staff and friends helped by reading and copyediting the text, which was finalized and published in the spring of 2025. Each chapter starts with beautiful, haunting photos of natural settings of this region by Laurie LePain Kopack.

The second volume brings events to the middle of the 19th century, completing the story of the families and communities that experienced the disaster of conquest, colonialization, and the triumph of the state and capital. According to Lorraine, this work had germinated as early as 1959, when Fredy began his lifelong critique of what he called "The Rise and Fall of Capital and Labor," a concept that started as an historical polemic, but which he would abandon as perhaps just another his-tory, a tool learned from the empire he wished to oppose. Instead, he chose a kind of story that strives to name and speak for Leviathan's unnamed victims, some of whom can't help but become its inevitable agents.

People interested in the lifework and ideas of Fredy Perlman or who appreciated the first volume will want to have a look at this book. Having helped on the project, I won't review it, but look forward to seeing how readers (and future reviewers) respond. It's an imperfect book. (Nowadays, one is not even supposed to write that truism in reviews, I know.) Readers will judge for themselves whether, be it volume 1 or 2, *The Strait* is an authentic depiction of its time and successful novelistic attempt to tell our well-known terrible, traumatic, collective tale. But if we manage to find our way out of it (for we too are players on this stage), Fredy's thesis may have helped us find our way.

The book is available from PM Press pmpress.org, AK Press akpress.org and blackandred.org or Black & Red, PO Box 02374, Detroit MI 48202.

David Watson has written for the FE, both regularly and occasionally, since 1969.

The Berkeley, Calif. **Slingshot** collective has published its **31st annual Organizer,** a radical day planner that comes in three formats. The press run has been increased to 24,000 copies and the all-volunteer staff expects it to run out as it did last year. The proceeds go to publish Slingshot newspaper, the following year's Organizer, and grant generous mutual aid to anarchist projects around the world, including the Fifth Estate.

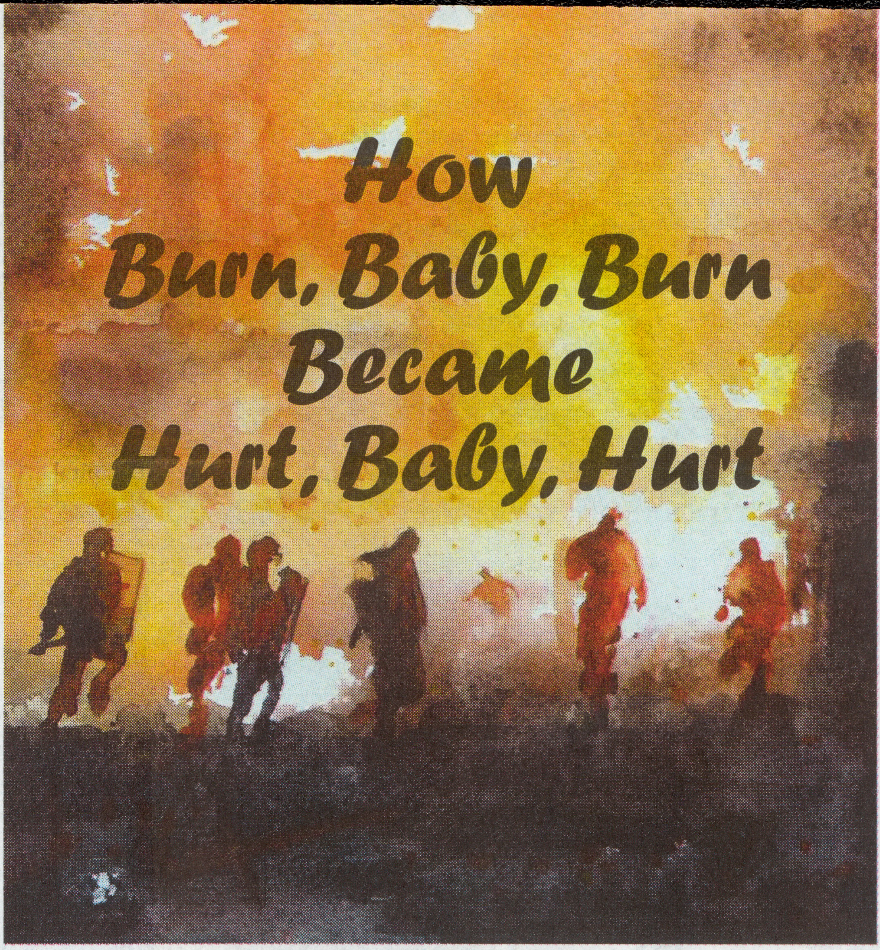
The 2026 Organizer comes in three formats. Pocket size either with a lay-flat perfect binding or with a spiral binding, both of which include radical dates for every day of the year, a contact list of radical groups around the globe, a menstrual calendar, info on police repression, extra note pages, plus much more. There's a choice of 18 color covers.

There's also a large-size spiral bound version with all the same features, entirely distinct artwork, and twice as much space.

It's available at indy bookstores at slingshotcollective.org/bookstores and via mail order from AK Press, Microcosm, Buy Olympia, Vision Works, Left Wing Books (Canada) and Active Distro (UK).

P.O. Box 3051, Berkeley, CA 94703; or email slingshotcollective@protonmail.com

How Burn, Baby, Burn Became Hurt, Baby, Hurt



Hurt Baby Hurt
William Walter Scott III
University of Michigan Press, 2025

MEGAN DOUGLASS

First self-published in 1970, *Hurt Baby Hurt,* is a fast-paced and brief yet intimate look into the life of William Walter Scott III, the man credited with inciting the so-called Detroit riots of July 1967.

Known to city residents as The Rebellion, the five days of fires and police and National Guared repression resulted in 43 deaths, 1,200 injuries, over 7,000 arrests, and hundreds of buildings and homes destroyed.

Throughout his memoir, we journey through Scott's tumultuous young life fueled by his feelings of disconnection from and disgust for his Blackness due to the insidious racism which plagues the United States. We follow his struggle as he searches for the acceptance and "upward mobility" of "whiteness" before realizing that playing this game has a zero sum.

Through his tale of personal discovery, reconnection to his Blackness and eventually rebellion, we are reminded that moments of uprising are rarely the tidy results of methodical planning or precise timelines. Rather, Scott's memoir reveals the complex internal and external relationships that accompany an individual's feelings of self-worth and value, rights, and responsibilities, identity and roles as they buck against pervasive and ever-shifting ideologies of skin-color, personhood, inclusion and exclusion.

His story highlights the ways in which popular uprisings often present more like a fever-dream, a momentary heating up of our minds and bodies during which the ending of the nightmare seems possible, where freedom feels just a protest away, where it could be possible to escape oppression if you just stop obeying these laws we are told are in place to keep us safe, even as they crush dreams, people, communities.

The first time I really learned the story of the Detroit riots was during my junior year at Huron High in Ann Arbor, Mich. in the 1990s, in a course on African American Literature. As the class covered the riots, and I wondered why I hadn't learned about them in any of my courses prior to this and why my parents never really spoke of them in depth (my father had been active in the civil rights movement as a student at Tennessee State in the 1960s), except to mention it briefly when we asked about the what had happened to Detroit.

We talked often of white flight, but never fully what had caused it or which fully honored and justified the riots as a symbol of politically valid resistance. It felt disorienting to learn a new perspective of such a major part of the story of Black rebellion and American history in a class taught by a white woman.

Currently, in my early 40s, I have lived in Detroit for the past eight years. My house is near 12th Street (renamed Rosa Parks Blvd. after the civil rights icon) next to Clairmount Street, the corner where the 1967 rebellion began and where William Scott played a key role in its origin. Now surrounded by abandoned homes and grassy expanses, the hidden legacy of this area links me to the past, present and future in quiet yet powerful ways.

As this neighborhood becomes a more a so-called desirable place to live, gentrification and new builds regularly crop up among the burnt-out shells of former grand homes and vacant lots. This corner continues to tell an undeniable tale of resistance, resilience, retribution, and repression.

After learning of Scott's move to Ann Arbor after the rebellion, it is significant to think of our reversed trajectories. Nearly 60 years earlier, he made the exact opposite choice. He fled Detroit to save himself from himself

and his anger at the city. In his memoir he writes, "One day about four weeks later [after being wrongfully incarcerated following the uprising], after just sitting around rotting inside, I decided to leave Detroit and start all over again… to forget about the bitterness and pain. I wanted to go some place where no one knew me or reminded me of what I had left behind."

As a somewhat new Detroit resident, I am perhaps a gentrifier in some twisted sense of fate, but I am also a Black woman whose best chance was to leave her increasingly unaffordable and unwelcoming hometown of Ann Arbor and move to the city. In the search for belonging, one son left this corner; one daughter found her way to it.

In parsing through what it means to have incited a rebellion, Scott writes of the moment when he throws a bottle at a cop raiding his father's after-hours drinking spot (a blind pig in the city parlance) and sparks the ensuing uprising. His sense of unease at creating mayhem while also feeling liberated lays clear the high stakes and fears of engaging in acts which fight back against an unjust system using means that

A Summer on Fire

Fifth Estate editorial group member Peter Werbe's book, *Summer on Fire: A Detroit Novel,* recounts the moment the Detroit Rebellion began on a hot summer night in 1967. The account excerpted below is written as fiction, however, the quotes attributed to the man whose act began the conflagration are taken directly from William Walter Scott III's *Hurt, Baby, Hurt.*

From *Summer on Fire:*

When the police wagons arrived from other precincts, the mostly white cops began roughly herding the arrested partiers into the waiting vehicles. It took over an hour for the arrestees to be loaded into the police vans, sufficient time for a crowd of a couple hundred people attracted to the commotion to show up and begin shouting insults at the police.

This raid and the treatment of Black people at the hands of the cops seemed no different from what was experienced regularly on the streets of the city. The Detroit police were roundly hated by the city's Black population as a white occupation force staffed by corrupt and brutal racists who routinely made life even more miserable for a mostly impoverished community. Normally, arrests and police harassment went unanswered.

This time it was different. Bill Scott, son of the owner of the illegal drinking establishment, saw not only his father's friends and neighbors being pushed into police vans, but witnessed the usual disrespect and unnecessary force being used, including cops twisting the arms of some of the women.

The 19-year-old Scott, growing increasingly angry, shouted at the police, "You don't have to treat them that way. They can walk. Let them walk, you white sons of bitches." He jumped up on the trunk of a near-by Pontiac and implored the growing crowd, "Are we going to let these peckerwood motherfuckers come down here any time they want and mess us around?" The assembled crowd, increasing in size and anger, yelled back, "Hell, no!"

Emboldened by the response, Scott grabbed a discarded Altes beer bottle from the street and heaved it at a near-by police lieutenant. It tumbled end over end, missing its target, shattering against the side of a blue and white cop car, igniting a social conflagration that was hundreds of years in the making. The one bottle contained enough social force behind it to begin the most destructive and deadly urban uprising of the decade.

Another empty was thrown. Another came flying at the cops as they ducked behind their cars. Then, a brick smashed a patrol car windshield. It became a cascade of bricks and bottles as the crowd grew. The cops left the area quickly.

Oh, say, you could see, by the dawn's early light, stores were being looted and fires were burning.

This review is simultaneously appearing in *Riverwise*, a Detroit community-based magazine created by a team of authors, writers, photojournalists, parents, grandparents, students, organizers, activists, artists, educators, and visionaries. They work to create media that reflects local activism and the profound new work being done in and around Detroit neighborhoods.
The Fifth Estate urges subscribing to *Riverwise* in solidarity.
riverwisedetroit.org/subscribe

aren't considered valid in mainstream narratives.

After someone praises him for starting the chaos that led to the burning of the city, he says, "Then lightning struck, hurling me back into a world of cold reality resulting from an honest approval…I got sick to my stomach, but soon got over that feeling because I knew it was out of anger toward those things a human being should battle against that I did what I'd done. All right. Maybe most people were just out for the looting alone and they didn't all have to agree with my interpretation of why one should or should not riot, but the rioters and looters did have one common interest: lack of respect for the law, the law that had abused them and their right to live."

One of the reasons we often only hear whispers in Detroit of "the riots," or speak of them as a veiled threat to once again "burn it down" when confronted with yet another instance of blatant and terrorizing police violence, or to explain to visitors why there are so many vacant lots around the city, is because of the conflicting experience that comes with recognizing rebellion as a real thing with real consequences. Lives are lost, communities are torn asunder, and the reaction of those in power may be an outsized, brutal punishment. It may not work out the way you thought, even if its echoes will reach farther into the future then you could have ever imagined. There are no guarantees in fighting for liberation.

A powerful and poetically beautiful piece of writing, Scott's memoir gives revolutionary food for thought in these dark times. What makes someone leave or feel like an outsider? What pulls them in and embraces them? What makes them stand up and fight? What makes them walk away in surrender to begin anew? What does it mean when during the nearly 60 years in between a pivotal event in social justice memory someplace considered desirable turns into a danger and the other desirable when it was once considered a danger? How do we affirm our right to humanity in contexts which won't fundamentally interact with their denial that we ever had that right in the first place? How do we find breathing room to grow under conditions which tell us we should be grateful for the mess we've been handed and work hard to clean it up, even as we are inundated (both literally and figuratively) with more and more pollution. How do you make sense of the dueling narratives that tell you if you just play nice, you'll get ahead, when all around you are bullies threatening your safety? How do we reconcile the notion of home and belonging when we are continuously denied its stability because we really aren't supposed to be here in the first place or are continually cast as guests even in the places we are born? How do you find consensus when the ones who lead us here don't want to share and getting too comfortable puts you in their cross hairs?

These are the kinds of questions undergird Scott's memoir. They lay bare the real human pain and trauma and messiness and unsettled existence that accompanies living in a racial and gendered and ableist capitalist state. One which refuses to acknowledge the resounding violence of its long-entrenched reliance upon a largely tacit yet distinctly felt system of apartheid.

One which paradoxically keeps us docile as it keeps us angry, keeps us on the edge of chaos even as we go about pretending this is all normal and everything is fine. Scott's story is one that reminds us exactly of our messy humanity. It reminds us that the real leaders and change-makers and the most significant leaps in our social evolution can come from the unlikeliest of people in what are seemingly the unlikeliest of places at the unlikeliest of times… like a former ward of the state defending his neighborhood on a random summer night at an illegal "juke joint" on the West Side of Detroit.

Megan Douglass is the Managing Editor of *Riverwise* Magazine, a collective based organizing hub which produces a somewhat quarterly independent and citizen-led social justice publication in the city of Detroit. Currently, she is ABD in her Ph.D. in Anthropology at Wayne State University, where she also teaches. Her research focuses upon studying decolonized methodologies, sustainable movements and the link between grassroots activism and spirituality.

About *Summer on Fire*

Summer on Fire follows Fifth Estate staff members as they wend their way through the 1967 summer of rioting, anti-war demonstrations, fighting fascists, rock and roll, drugs, anarchism, the White Panther Party, Wilhelm Reich, and a bomb plot.

It is available at the Fifth Estate fifthestate.org website as a special offer with subscriptions and at the author's site peterwerbe.com.

Until All Are Free

"All Will Be Equalized": Georgia's Freedom Seekers of the Swamps, Backwoods, and Sea Islands 1526-1890
Andrew Zonneveld
On Our Own Authority Publishing, 2024

DAVID TIGHE

Plans for a major celebration of the Columbian Quincentenary in 1992 led to an upswelling of radical resistance. Indigenous groups, Black radicals, the Chicano movement, anarchists and others fought hard to disrupt the glorification of the five-hundredth anniversary of genocide and settler colonialism.

Their efforts led to significant push back to the official narrative about Columbus and colonization among the general public. The exploration of other histories and other Americas was a big part of that. One important book that came out of that resistance was *Gone to Croatan: Origins of North American Dropout Culture* (edited by James Koehnline and Ron Sakolsky) in 1993.

The book provides examples of Maroon societies —autonomous enclaves of self-emancipated slaves —in Virginia's Great Dismal Swamp, in Seminole Florida (some of whom migrated to Mexico), and elsewhere. It celebrates Indigenous resistance, and survival in places where Native Americans had supposedly been extinguished (like New Jersey or North Carolina). It gives examples of multi-ethnic communities, conspiracies, and insurrections against the American colonial regime, against slavery, and against Atlantic capitalism.

For the past three decades, there has been a slow accumulation of radical scholarship which reinforces the arguments presented in *Gone to Croatan*. The understanding of Maroon communities in North America has been completely turned on its head. Archaeologists in the field, and historians in the archives have provided more and more evidence for the widespread, persistent, and effective resistance to slavery in a multiplicity of forms, including long-term Maroon communities—something which academic consensus denied for decades.

"All Will Be Equalized"(AWBE) is in many ways the right book for the current moment. It is a book of popular history, a synthesis of academic sources for non-academics, written from an explicitly anarchist perspective. It is broad enough to be a great introduction, is rlatively short, but well written and full of inspiring stories and historical detail. Evidence is presented that highlights Georgia as an important locale for Maroon communities and the resistance to slavery. Previous scholarship has tended to focus on the Great Dismal Swamp (in Virginia and North Carolina), Florida, and to a lesser extent South Carolina and Louisiana. *AWBE* adds Georgia to that list.

Zonneveld, an independent historian, journalist, and naturalist, describes the subject of the book as how "peripheral and clandestine communities in Georgia's swamps and backwoods became places of refuge for displaced Indigenous peoples, Africans fleeing enslavement, and renegades of European descent who were fleeing oppressive lives of poverty and hard labor in colonial societies". It examines the role that Maroons played in slave insurrections, and the less spectacular, but no less crucial day-to-day forms of resistance to slave society. It also tells the interrelated stories of Indigenous and Black resistance, and the role that some poor

whites played in those struggles.

This book provides ample evidence that slavery was resisted from the very beginning, and consistently by enslaved people, and that they had Indigenous and white allies the whole time. It begins in 1526, when "the leader of the Spanish colony succumbed to dysentery, a violent conflict erupted between two rival factions seeking to lead the colony. During the Spaniards' infighting, the enslaved Africans of San Miguel de Gualdape saw an opportunity for self-emancipation and the Guale likewise seized the moment to expel the Spanish invaders.

"The Africans set fire to a Spanish leaders' cabin and made their escape to a nearby Guale community while Guale warriors 'rose against the Spaniards' and destroyed the settlement. The African rebels, the first to be enslaved in North America, now became the first Africans in North America to rebel against slavery. The fact that their rebellion was successful, and was distinguished by militant Afro-Indigenous solidarity, makes their story even more compelling.".

It is interesting to learn the prevalence of desertion and draft evasion during the Civil war. The Okefenokee Swamp became a favorite hideout for Southern anti-Confederate war resisters who refused to fight for slavery. Zonneveld details these white deserters meeting Seminoles as well as the increasing numbers of self-emancipated Africans and forming what he characterizes as "multi-racial resistance communities." He also points to similar groups throughout the state, including in the North Georgia mountains outside of Dahlonega. Bands such as these engaged in varying levels of confrontation with Confederate society.

Three African co-conspirators named Sam, Nelson, and George planned an insurrection alongside a white man named John Vickery, which sought to seize Confederate weapons and the town of Quitman, Georgia and from there raid the surrounding areas with the hopes of provoking a generalized slave uprising. They were discovered and hanged, but it was this kind of foment that makes Zonneveld argue that "as the war raged it took on the character of a genuine social revolution."

The refocusing of our attention on direct action, and more specifically on the direct action of enslaved Africans against the institution of slavery is crucial to an accurate understanding of history. Here Zonneveld echoes the celebrated historian Marcus Rediker who argues that the enslaved deserve the greatest credit for the resistance to and eventual abolition of slavery, not white abolitionists or governments.

AWBE discusses the defeat of Reconstruction following the Civil War and the bitter reimposition of white supremacy through Jim Crow. This is where the main text of the book ends. What follows is a conversation between author Andrew Zonneveld and his mentor, historian and activist Modibo Kadalie.

As a veteran of Civil Rights and Black Liberation struggles since the 1960s, Kadalie lends a longer view to the relationship between radical scholarship and activism. The discussion makes clear what was implicit in the book: that this history is expansive. Everywhere that slavery existed, it was resisted by defiant freedom seeking people, and the specific evidence that Zonneveld presents for Georgia is just one piece of the puzzle.

Scholars continue to turn up new evidence for Maroon communities all over the Americas, of slave rebellions, of multi-racial conspiracies against colonialism. There is also a strong continuity between antebellum American society and the contemporary United States. It makes perfect sense that radicals of all sorts are looking to these histories for inspiration and strategic insight.

As I write this, the US Government has opened "Alligator Alcatraz," a detention facility for people kidnapped by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) with all its allusions to historical white supremacist tropes about alligators eating African American children. It also evokes the fortress prison of Alcatraz, terrible and inescapable. But there were escapes from Alcatraz.

Even more poignant was the American Indian Movement's occupation of Alcatraz from 1969-1971. For hundreds of years, Maroon communities existed in the Great Dismal Swamp, in Okefenokee swamp, in the Florida everglades. The swamps were places of refuge and resistance where self-emancipated Africans lived in close proximity to alligators and crocodiles, but free from racial terror.

No doubt a few slave catchers provided a meal to the Maroon's neighbours. Multi-ethnic, popular resistance to the Trump administration's aggressive ICE raids have grown in part out of the Stop Cop City movement which started in Zonneveld's hometown of Atlanta. That Haitians, in the US and in Haiti, have been in the forefront of this uprising should come as no surprise. Haiti is the only country in the world founded by a successful slave rebellion and largely plotted by Maroons.

AWBE provides us with very resonant history that is directly relevant to the present day and our resistance as anarchists.

The past didn't go anywhere. The struggle continues.

David Tighe is an anarchist, mail artist, and zine maker living in Alberta, Canada

Everywhere that slavery existed it was resisted by defiant freedom seeking people, and the specific evidence presented for Georgia is just one piece of the puzzle.

photo: Dennis Fox dennisfoxphoto.com

AI is not empowering

NICK DEPASCAL

Early in the first part of his recent book, *The Message*, Ta-Nehisi Coates, writing to his former students at Howard University, reflects on what made this particular cohort and their relationship with him special, honing in on Howard's importance as a university "founded to combat the long shadow of slavery—a shadow that we understood had not yet retreated."

For his students as for himself, Coates saw that "we could never practice writing solely for the craft itself, but must necessarily believe our practice to be in service of that larger emancipatory mandate," and that "For you there can be no real distance between writing and politics."

Lately, with the ascendance of tech bros into Trump's administration, as well as the uncontained force and effects of Generative AI in all avenues of society and life, but especially, it seems, in education, the political, economic, and cultural effects of GenAI are brought into ever sharper relief. As usual, business and industry titans are most interested in convincing us that the eventual usurpation of not only our most mundane tasks, but apparently the creation of art, music, and literature, by AI applications and algorithms, is not only inevitable, but desirable as well.

However, these technologies are not built to empower us, but to supplant us, to center ever more of production into the hands of the few. This runs counter to consistent calls for teaching critical thinking and digital literacy in education. It is hard to ask students to be critical and thoughtful, to engage with ideas honestly and openly if we are at the same time putting tools in their hands that hallucinate and make thinking and creativity an afterthought.

Take, for example, a recent opinion piece in *The New York Times*, by LinkedIn co-founder, Microsoft board member, and early funder of OpenAI Reid Hoffman. Representative of the "it's-inevitable-and-I-stand-to-make-a-lot-of-money-from-this-so-let's-be-positive" AI school of thought currently en vogue, Hoffman's article paints a rosy picture of ChatGPT's "quirky charm" and its "flashes of epiphany."

After openly acknowledging his "personal stake in future of artificial intelligence," Hoffman goes on to tout his belief that "by giving billions of people access to A.I. tools they can use in whatever ways they choose, we can create a world where A.I. augments and amplifies human creativity and labor instead of simply replacing it."

Lovely, for sure, but history, from the time of King Ludd in the early 19th century to the gig work of today tells us that capital has only used time and labor saving technologies to consolidate power, line its pockets, and control an unruly populace seeking such outlandish desires as housing, bread, and a dignified life where they have a say over their labor and leisure, free from violence and oppression.

As with most articles touting the prospective benefits of artificial intelligence despite its infancy on the world stage, Hoffman's analysis is scant on the details of how we will arrive at this future world where the "billions of people" *given* access to this technology will have the time and luxury to use it in "whatever way they choose."

Will the powers that *give* us this

Should we give up our ability to struggle with the word, the sentence, the grammar, the meaning?

technology also *give* us a reality in which all humans and nonhumans co-exist in an ecological harmony free from inequality and oppression, where one chooses one's work in a way that feeds their soul, and their leisure time is truly theirs?

And can't what is *given* just as easily be taken away should those receivers decide to use such technologies to upend the status quo and destroy the world which thrives on their oppression? We'll have to wait a few years to find out, at least until corporations have wrung every possible penny out of artificial intelligence technology, and the finger pointing on top of the smoky ruins of our planet can commence.

Which is a long way of saying, generative artificial intelligence will not be empowering, at least not until the material circumstances of our world change drastically, and perhaps not even then given its environmental toll. Which brings me back to Ta-Nehisi Coates and his thinking on writing and its purpose.

Reflecting on what the "finished work" means once it leaves his hands and enters the world, Coates muses that "Writing and rewriting is the attempt to communicate not just a truth but the ecstasy of a truth. It is not enough for me to convince the reader of my argument; I want them to feel that same private joy that I feel alone." Truth. Ecstasy. Private joy.

Regardless of what wealthy purveyors of tech might say, it seems beyond reason to imagine the sort of feelings that Coates describes above ever coming from or being communicated to us by AI in the revelatory way in which a poet describes a personal loss that transcends space and time to speak to a reader a century or continent away. Or, a journalist on the ground describes the collective joys and sorrows of a people suffering or throwing off the yoke of oppression. Because Generative AI, especially in the forms of Large Language Models (LLMs)compile, collate, regurgitate, but do not create and cannot emancipate. It cannot free itself and, in its freeing, seek to free others, through words and visions of revolution and love. To people, that still remains.

To consider what we will have wrought with the unfettered and unthought use of this technology, we need only consider the numerous promises and predictions being made by tech companies in relation to AI use in schools and education. The sudden and precipitous rise of ChatGPT and other generative AI chatbots and tools has led to a slew of opinions and ideas about its uses and possibilities within schools, in the mainstream media, among edu-celebrities, in online teacher forums, and to a lesser degree among teachers and administrators themselves. The emotional range of these discussions or diatribes runs the gamut from gleeful to hopeful to fearful, with some heralding it as the solution to all the educational issues, and others as the apocalyptic, final destruction of teaching as a profession.

Perhaps AI can make everyone a more competent or persuasive writer. Perhaps AI can make everyone a more competent or persuasive fraud. But neither of these scenarios get to the heart of what is at stake should we give up our ability and desire to struggle with the word, the sentence, the grammar, the meaning.

On the subject of censorship and book banning, Coates writes, "This is not about me or any writer of the moment. It is about writers to come—the boundaries of their imagination, the angle of their thinking, the depth of their questions." Considering Coates' words, we should worry that as we thoughtlessly offer AI to our students (and ourselves) as a substitute for the struggles and triumphs of the acts of creation, do we not also risk submerging their (our) questions, flattening their (our) thinking, and enclosing their (our) imaginations in ever tighter spaces. Will we, or future generations, cede our unruly garden plot where surprises and possibility lurk, for a bit of imagined convenience and a homogenized crop?

If capitalism is about ever-increasing speed, of production and consumption, then what is needed is a call for a slowdown and a reckoning with generative AI in society at large. None of us should offload our empowerment and our liberation to machines and the false promises of big tech.

Nick DePascal is a poet and teacher in Albuquerque.

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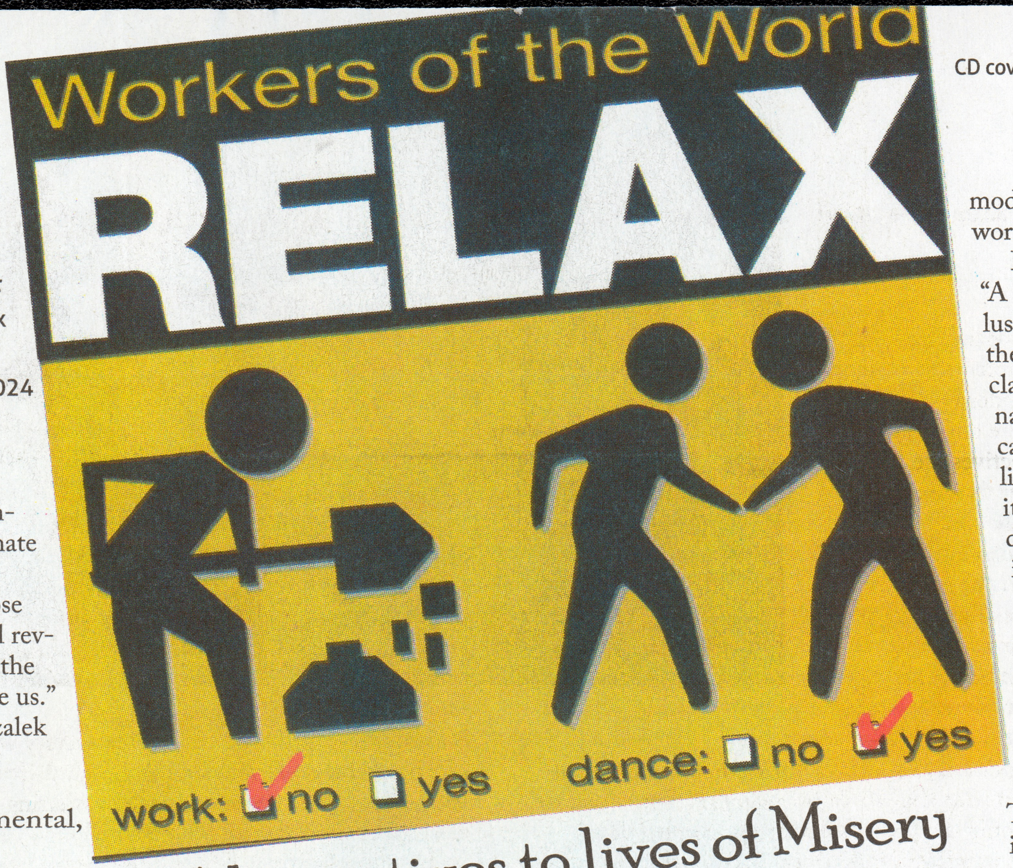


CD cover: The Layabouts

Alternatives to lives of Misery

Jobs, Jive, & Joy: An Argument for the Utopian Spirit
Bernard Marszalek
Ztangi Press and Charles H. Kerr, 2024

RUI PRETI

"Certainly, contending with climate catastrophe and civilization collapse requires a cultural revolution to match the devastation before us."
—Bernard Marszalek

The environmental, health, social, economic and political stresses of the last few decades have spurred the formation of increasing numbers of mutual aid groups for sharing resources and solidarity. Especially since the emergence of the Covid pandemic, people are reflecting on how to move their lives beyond working in the current world's humiliating, boring, and unhealthy jobs.

So, it is not surprising that more and more are turning for inspiration to the dreams of better, more socially fulfilling societies that have flourished during hard times over the centuries.

Bernard Marszalek, the author of *Jobs, Jive, & Joy*, has a long history of exploring and advocating for the utopian spirit in everyday life. As a participant in the grassroots anarchistic/anti-authoritarian global insurgency of the 1960s, he was one of the founders of Chicago's Solidarity Bookshop in 1964. Together, he and his comrades enthusiastically read, shared and discussed publications and ideas of anarchists from many parts of the globe, as well as those of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the Surrealist movement.

As part of this exploration, Marszalek collaborated in reissuing an English edition of Paul Lafarge's *The Right to be Lazy,* earlier published in English in 1907 by Charles Kerr and Co. Although he was Marx's son-in-law and supporter during the debates of the First International, in this book Lafarge disagreed with Marx's contention that work was a positive part of being non-alienated, of expressing one's human essence. *The Right To Be Lazy* proudly ridicules the modern bourgeois work ethic.

Lafarge wrote: "A strange delusion possesses the working classes of the nations where capitalist civilization holds its sway. This delusion drags in its train the individual and social woes which for two centuries have tortured sad humanity. This delusion is the love of work, the furious passion for work, pushed even to the exhaustion of the vital force of the individual and his progeny."

Marszalek has continued this exploration over the years. *Jobs, Jive, & Joy* is a richly detailed examination of some of the most significant utopian thought of the past three centuries. In the book, he highlights alternative perspectives that reject the work ethic and the commodification of human beings and other living creatures, as well as denying the inevitability of hierarchies and exploitation by elites.

He explores differences in paradigms which have helped create the cultural/political conditions generally prevailing in different societies. For example, time has been understood and measured differently in eras past and present. In pre-industrial societies, time was generally understood and measured in terms of the duration of tasks to be completed by individuals and/or groups. The skilled craftspeople and peasants of medieval Europe did not calculate the hours spent at tasks, but thought in terms of producing appropriate quality results.

Times of the year were not understood in terms of abstract units of time, but reckoned by seasons, the phases of the moon, and religious rituals, marked by bells, horns or loud singing.

In modern society, time is comprehended with reference to the amount of monetary exploitation of workers, and profits for the owners of industry. But it required several decades for workers to forget pre-industrial time and reluctantly internalize schedules of labor prescribed by the employers as justified and being a hard worker as morally

The Luddites were right!

admirable. This paradigm shift is what has enabled the development of the modern work ethic.

It has become clear that utopian perspectives are the only ones currently capable of comprehensively challenging the contradictions in industrial society between the necessity of work and desires for an enjoyable and fulfilling life.

Marszalek interweaves discussions of past utopian aspirations and projects with his own mixed work experiences, those of his mother and those of others. He points out that while no examples from the past or present can offer definitive solutions to current dead-ends, situations in which people have had control over their own activities are the most satisfying, and lead to the most creativity.

Delving into the heritage of several utopians, Marszalek encourages readers to think about what aspects may still be relevant today. These utopians asserted the strength of people's imagination and passionate creativity having an impact on daily life.

For example, Charles Fourier, writing before the major consolidations of industry and agriculture of the mid-19th century, understood that achieving authentic individual and social freedom would require abolishing economic slavery and the necessity for people to work in order to survive. Only then would they be enabled to contribute to the good of the community in the ways they were most capable of doing.

Fourier also recognized that people's experience and understanding of work is shaped by the social context. Useful drudgery can be fulfilling when those who do it are recognized and appreciated as contributors to the group, and the work is understood as the means to a pleasurable end. For him The relationships between freedom, work and pleasure needed to be recognized as a totality, firmly intertwined.

Marszalek's book also explores the ideas of William Morris, who emphasized the relationship between freedom and fulfilling work. In the second part of the 19th century, he witnessed and opposed the centralization and mechanization of industry and amenities in personal life as well as the growing degradation and pollution of the environment produced on a daily basis.

Morris considered capitalism and the profit motive as corrosive to both individual self-expression and cooperative bonds. He argued that a truly free society would have to be one based on everyone's enjoyment and creativity, focused on the respect for everyone's creativity, sharing of art and appreciation for the balance of nature.

By the end of the 19th century, some progressives were advocating state administered social welfare programs capable of providing basic life needs in return for accepting centralized efficient regimentation. One of these was Edward Bellamy who wrote a very popular fantasy novel, *Looking Backward,* idealizing just such a society. Morris responded with direct critique and by writing a fantasy novel of his own, *News From Nowhere.*

Morris welcomed mechanization of tedious and tiring tasks, but he was appalled by the destructive nature of modern technology and the brutal hierarchical social organization of life it engendered. He refused to accept mechanical engineering as the ultimate human achievement for which autonomy should be surrendered.

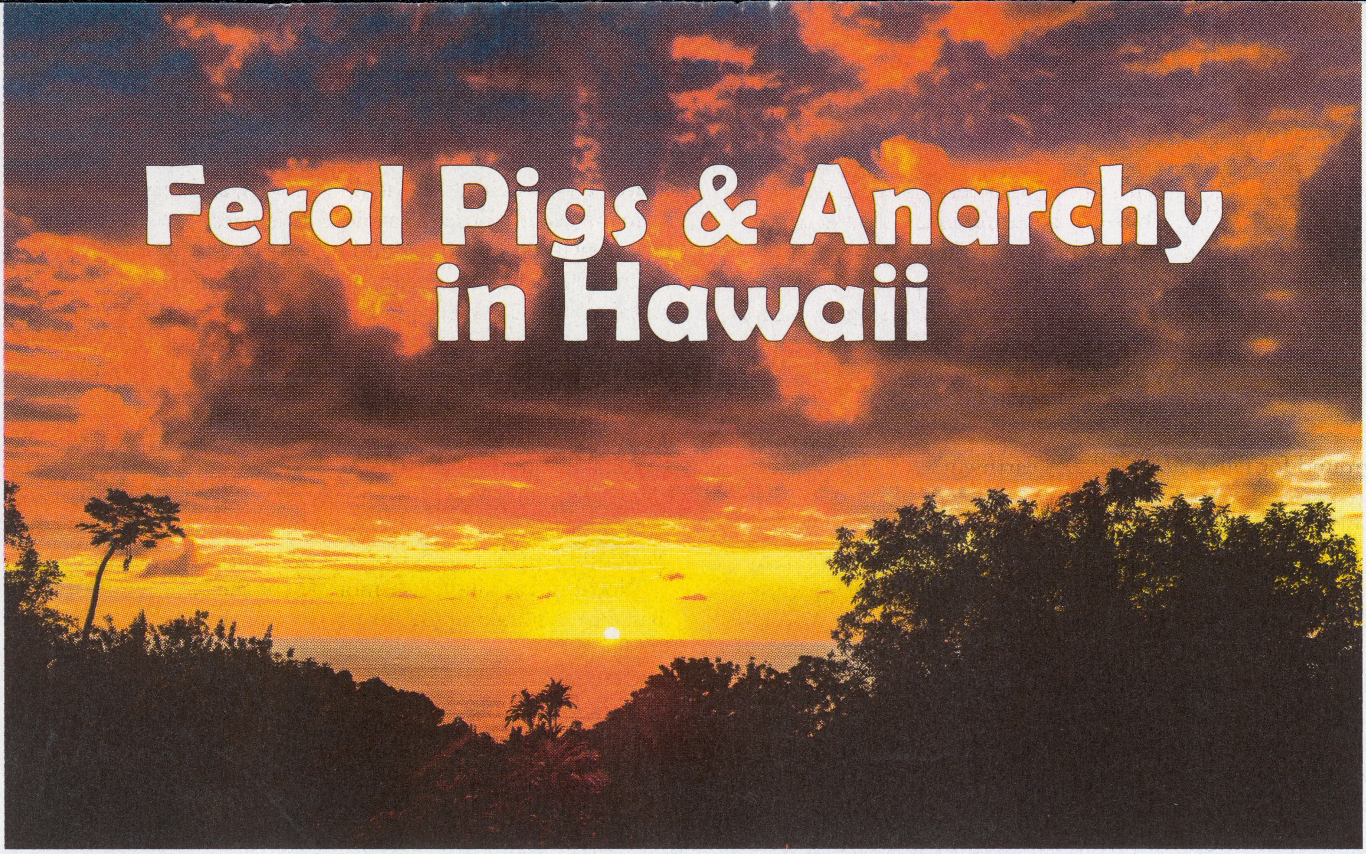
Today, some of the worst aspect of modern authoritarianism are pushing the world toward disaster and we need to call forth the highest sentiments of solidarity and mutual aid to contend with them.

Marszalek examines several different proposed solutions to the current impasse, calls out the jive of some and is hopeful about others. On the whole the book does a valuable service by reminding us of the great variety of utopian alternative perspectives that reject authoritarian rule and capitalist social relations.

As Bernard Marszalek aptly asserts, "The impetus to overcome the misery of everyday life, so that daily expectations of delight can be experienced, is foundational for future transformational social activity."

Rui Preti is a long-time friend of the Fifth Estate and a great believer in the value of continuous questioning of cultural paradigms.

Feral Pigs & Anarchy in Hawaii



BJØRN OLSON

It's an hour before sunset and I am sitting between two spindly coffee trees with a larger tree stump in front for a blind to partially hide behind. The brim of my grass hat is pulled low to block a pin hole of sunlight that beams through the canopy of a tall mango tree. Leaves rustle in the breeze blowing up the hill from the ocean a thousand feet below.

I am at the edge, the western border, of my family's coffee and fruit farm in Hawaii. It's the least managed and unkempt area, what the permaculturists call Zone 5. Beyond, everything is feral—the plants, the birds, the animals.

Every species that I can see has been introduced by humans and yet it is all wild and free–undomesticated. I have come here to listen to the jungle wind down for the day, to calm my mind, to meditate. Resting on my lap is a .38 caliber lever action rifle. I am also here to hunt feral pigs.

A pair of Kalij pheasants follow one another and half-heartedly peck at the ground. The male is dark black and bluish grey with a shocking patch of crimson red around its face. They go about their business, meandering through the uneven row of banana stalks pecking the ground as they go.

Brought to Hawaii in 1962 as game birds, the pheasants escaped and found their niche on this garden island in the middle of the Pacific. After a few more nibbles, they take flight directly above and prepare to bed down for the night in an old growth mango tree. They rustle for a few minutes in their branch and then all is quiet again.

The feral pigs preceded the pheasants by over a thousand years. The ancient, sea voyaging Polynesians brought the first pigs to Hawaii on their canoes. These people also brought chickens, taro, sweet potato, and a whole host of edible and utilitarian plants to cultivate on the nearly-life-devoid areas of the volcanic islands. These ancient Hawaiians brought with them a highly stratified, resource intensifying culture with horticultural knowledge of how to terraform and cultivate.

For over a thousand years, the pigs remained domesticates. The highly favored protein sources of the ancient Hawaiians remained constrained to the curated sanctuaries—well-fed and tended, fattened for slaughter.

I hear a squeal in the tall cane grass field just a few hundred feet ahead of me. The sun has set but there is still a half an hour of twilight to see by. They are coming. I raise up on one knee to peer over an old, crumbling rock wall. I rest my rifle on a stone, peer down my iron sights and wait.

In a paper titled, Pigs in Hawaii, from Traditional to Modern, the authors state that "Captain Cook brought European pigs during his first voyage to Hawaii, and many other introductions of European and Asian swine followed.

As feral pig populations grew on all islands, they began ranging more freely in the forests. Omnivorous and without any non-human predators, pigs began to thrive in the native forests and successfully established large populations. Within only a few generations, any escaped domesticated pigs reverted to a feral form, retaining the large body size of European swine, but severing their dependence on human beings."

Severed dependence from human beings, going feral, es-

caping captivity, systems of dominance, and being free is the sweet music of anarchy—the beautiful idea—that is never far from my mind, and what I am striving for in my own life. These pigs, the jungle cats, the parrots, and many of the plants in this corner of the world figured out how to escape the maze. I love and cherish the pigs for what they are and for what they represent.

An all-black, medium-sized female emerges from the cane grass. She boldly walks into the open, sniffing the ground for fallen mangoes and earthworms. I pull the lever back on my rifle and still my breathing. The afternoon sea breeze is in my favor, and she does not smell or see me. There is just enough remaining twilight to see my forward sight and I train it on a spot just behind her ear. I squeeze the trigger, and she drops without a sound. Perfect.

The small-holding, commercial farmers in this region despise the pigs for the damage and erosion they can cause. The pigs interfere with the market and in a market-driven society this is an injustice that cannot stand. Humans grant themselves extraordinary privilege to tear up, modify and destroy the land-base. Observing these traits in other species, however, causes anger and outrage.

Thinking like an ecosystem is the mantra I repeat in my mind throughout the days I work on our farm. Who needs water? What needs more light, to be pruned, pulled or replaced? Can I get from one patch of land to another without disturbing the beautiful spider's webs? Can I plant things that improve life for the other species who also call these five-acres their home—the worms, the bees, the butterflies, the birds?

On my morning walks I am often dismayed to discover new pig damage, which often takes hours or sometimes days to repair. In other instances, however, the pigs uproot and overturn heavily overgrown areas, break up the soil, add their piss and shit fertilizers, and improve areas; work that would take me days, they accomplish in one quick raid. For good or bad, the pigs are part of this novel ecosystem, and I want to learn to live with them rather than despise them.

In Tyson Yunkaporta's book, Sand Talk, he elaborates on what the original instructions were for pre-civilized, undomesticated human beings. We are a custodial species. Our unique consciousness allows us to project, to imagine the future and the outcomes our actions can have. Our evolutionary gift is to use this intelligence to serve our interests while also being mindful of the interrelated dependencies of all the other lifeforms we share this planet with.

On our small, family farm we help to grow the coffee, the fruit, macadamia nuts, avocado trees, a vegetable garden, herbs, and a whole host of ornamental plants. I cherish and admire them all, but the food resource I value most is the rich, succulent and nutrient-dense feral pig. Nothing we cultivate comes close to matching this meat and fat.

Wild and feral pigs have all of the essential nutrition (essential amino acids, fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals) that humans need in order to avoid deficiencies — a superfood that nourishes our bodies and brains.

In our globalized, energy and resource hungry society, sustainability is a logical fallacy. Perpetual growth, it has been said, is the ideology of a cancer cell. This technological, industrial civilization also fosters no meaningful relationships with the resources we consume. We are longing for connection and a sense of belonging, the very things civilization and capitalism have stolen. Connection and purpose have been replaced with competition, individualism, dualism, consumerism, and a whole host of entertaining distractions, psychotherapists, and drugs to drown our sorrows in.

Nothing has taught me more about the concept of custodianship than taking my turn three months a year tending to my family's five-acre farmstead. Learning to cultivate things that are good not merely for me and my family but also the other-than-humans who live here, who deserve to eat and thrive as well. Our health and well-being are bound to theirs. This is a relationship, not a transaction.

After I finish butchering the pig, I dig a hole in the garden bed. I place the skin, guts and the head inside and cover it over with a couple feet of loamy dirt. In a few week's time I will transplant sweet potatoes in this spot. The potatoes will love and devour the nitrogen and other nutrients from the pig carcass in the ceaseless cycle of life and death and more life.

The following evening my family and I gather around the deep-dish cast-iron pot and begin serving dinner. French winemakers have a word that defines a region's unique flavor. The word is terroir. This meat has tremendous terroir: the macadamia nuts, the volcanic soil, the avocado, the rain, and the wild spirit. All of this and more is in each succulent bite.

This meal is much more than mere constituents, flavor and essential nutrients, it's a sacrament to the land, to freedom, to anarchy. I am seeking my own path out of the maze, out of domestication, and into a primal embrace of an unmediated life. The pigs, the jungle cats, and all the undomesticated plants and animals on and around these five acres remind me that anarchy is not only possible, it's desirable.

Bjørn Olson is a Homer, Alaska-based filmmaker, photographer, freelance writer, anarchist, wilderness adventurer, and environmental activist. He was born in an abandoned trapper's cabin in interior Alaska. He has dedicated his life to exploring far-flung corners of the state by human-power and documenting his experiences.

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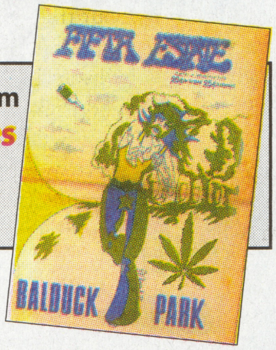

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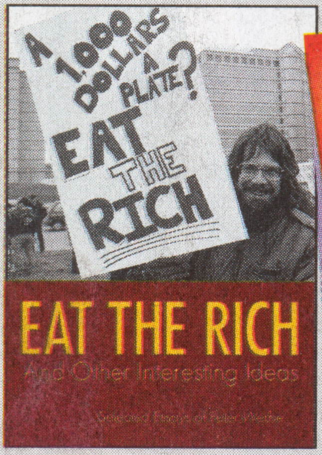

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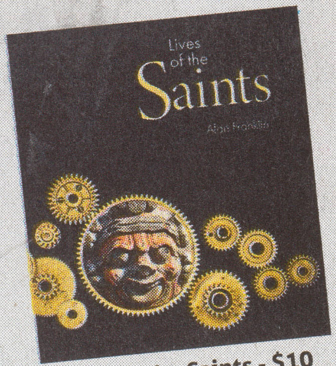

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